

A STUDY OF CHICAGO'S STOCKYARDS  
COMMUNITY

---

II

THE AMERICAN GIRL IN THE  
STOCKYARDS DISTRICT

BY

LOUISE MONTGOMERY



AN INVESTIGATION CARRIED ON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE  
BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO SETTLEMENT  
AND THE CHICAGO ALUMNAE CLUB OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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STOCKYARDS DISTRICT**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the stockyards district, as in every other foreign industrial community, the American-born girl lives between two determining influences, the unseen traditions of the Old World and the visible customs of the New. The foreign parent and the American child are under one roof, struggling with the misunderstandings common to age and youth but intensified by the natural desire of the one to cling to inherited standards and by the strong young will of the other to be a vital part of the present generation. It is the purpose of this survey to consider some of the phases of this difficult environment and in dealing with them to reveal as far as possible the mental attitudes of both parent and child as they affect the future of the potential woman.

The 900 families who form the background of the study have been known to the University of Chicago Settlement for a period extending into the past from one to eight years. The recorded facts are recent, having been secured between November 1, 1911, and September 1, 1912. Their interpretation rests, not alone upon the statistical evidence of a single investigation, but upon the cumulative knowledge gained through eight years of daily contact with the life of the neighborhood. Within this group of 900 families, 500 girls were selected from whom it was possible to obtain with a fair degree of accuracy the information needed to throw light upon the topics under consideration. No girl who at any time has been recorded as defective or delinquent was included in the number. Among the parents five foreign peoples predominate: Poles, Germans, Bohemians, Irish, and Slovaks. A miscellaneous group includes English, Scotch, Dane, Swede, Dutch, Lithuanians, and Russian Jews. Of the 500 girls, 458 were born in Chicago in the stockyards district, 21 in neighboring states, and 21 in foreign countries. The 42 girls born outside of Chicago were brought to their present homes at so early an age that the general conditions and opportunities of the stockyards community have been practically the same for them. No attempt was made to

draw final conclusions in regard to racial differences under a common American environment. Without exception the group of 500 girls represents a prevailing type apart from the historical background of the parents—the first generation in America, struggling to keep up with American standards and making every effort to avoid being classed as “foreigners.” The parents come to America with a fixed sense of inherited class distinctions. In a district where within a radius of ten blocks one may hear a babel of tongues, a confusion arising from the mingled voices of people from twelve nations of Europe, there are necessarily different levels of population, distinct social groups which may be either of the same or of different racial composition. There are also other groups held together by a common feeling of attainment in the New World regardless of the place of birth, for in America unification cannot depend upon race. The bitter recollection of ancient wars may be present. The conquered and the conquering peoples are side by side, but the effort to sustain a continued sense of national separation is weakened by the daily recognition of an economic status which, especially among the young, tends to obliterate the rigid old-country standards, prejudices, and traditions, and to substitute an unfixed determinant based on changing opportunities. These invisible forces so vital in the life of such a community are not easily given objective values in tables of statistics.

The principal topics of inquiry are presented in the following order: (1) the educational standards of the community; (2) the local schools and their adaptation to needs of the girl; (3) the girl as a wage-earning child; (4) the working-girl, her present wage and probable opportunities; (5) problems of adjustment.

## SECTION I. THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS OF THE COMMUNITY

### I. THE ATTITUDE OF THE MAJORITY

The dominant educational standard of the neighborhood is the minimum legal requirement of the state, accepted with little protest by the majority, for the people as a whole are essentially a law-abiding people. By habit and tradition they bow before the accepted order of things. In the absence of higher ideals

585, or 65 per cent,<sup>1</sup> of the 900 families take advantage of the compulsory age law to fix the limit of the child's schooling. Within this group it is possible to make a loose classification of the controlling influences among the parents who maintain this minimum standard: (a) the peasant belief that education is the privilege of "the upper classes"; (b) the need of money and the ambition to own property; (c) the failure of the school to meet the practical demands of the working people; (d) the ecclesiastical ideal of education which must permeate a community that is dominantly Catholic. This classification is not given to represent exclusive boundary lines. It is common to find families both consciously and unconsciously governed by two or more or all of these influences united.

a) Among many hard-headed peasants there is the traditional feeling that education is a luxury either for the well-to-do or for those whom some mysterious power has placed above the common people. "You are not a rich American. You need no education beyond the law," was the answer of the Slovak mother to the daughter who wished to remain in school until the end of her course. "My children belong to the working class," said the German father. "Education will spoil them for earning a living with the hands." Polish parents who owned a three-story tenement from which they were collecting sixty dollars a month in rentals placed their fourteen-year-old little girl in a factory at three dollars a week, not because they were pressed for money, but because in the natural order of things she was destined to marry a Polish working-man and it would be very unwise to unfit her for that position by giving her "the education of a Yankee." In more than one-half of the 585 families this underlying sentiment rises and falls, sometimes carrying all the weight of an authority that has never been questioned, and again overpowered by a sudden comprehension of the equal opportunities open to all classes through the public schools.

b) A number much larger than that in the above group find an actual need of the child's wages to supplement the earnings of the

<sup>1</sup> The percentage is higher for the neighborhood as a whole. To secure material for later comparisons in the wage-earning capacity of girls, a search was made for families who had kept their girls in school to complete the elementary course.

father. Broadly speaking, when the father's wage falls below two dollars a day there is less hope for the extension of the girl's schooling beyond the compulsory age limit, although the neighborhood furnishes heroic examples of parental sacrifices proving many exceptions to the rule. In this group of 585 families there are 125 women widowed, deserted, or with husbands incapacitated for work, who are dependent wholly or in part on the wages of their children, and the wage of 297 men is steadily below two dollars a day.

The ambition of the immigrant to own property in America is one of his most striking characteristics. For it he will make almost unbelievable sacrifices both of his own comfort and of that of his wife and children, since the heavily mortgaged house too often calls for the united wage-earning power of the entire family. "We are building without money," was the reply of the fourteen-year-old girl when asked why she was leaving school before completing the sixth grade. The strength of this feeling is due in part to the natural desire for a home which in the stockyards district is intensified by a constant fear of reaching an early<sup>1</sup> old age in helpless penury. The possession of a house from which one may draw an income is the highest mark of prosperity, just as the inability to pay one's rent is the lowest degree of poverty. The sacrifice of little girls to this passionate determination to own property may be found in any social group, from the undaunted widow who takes in washing six days of the week and drives her children to any task that will bring in money to meet the payments on the four-room cottage, to the thriving saloon-keeper who is landlord over a dozen tenants. Thirty-seven of the 125 women who must live without the help of the wage-earning man, 138 of the 297 men who can never command two dollars a day, and 95 of the remaining 163 are property-owners.<sup>2</sup>

c) The failure of the elementary school to meet the practical needs of an industrial community is recognized by many parents.

<sup>1</sup> Before he is forty years of age the stockyards laborer begins to have a fear of being laid off permanently and giving place to younger men. At forty-five he is in the ranks of the old men, with a lowered vitality that lessens his chances of employment in any capacity.

<sup>2</sup> The important subject of housing as it affects the family life has been purposely omitted, as this subject will be considered in forthcoming papers.

Although they cannot always define their dissatisfaction, their ultimate demand is that educational processes shall be measured in terms of economic advantage. With the vague notion that the school should bear some relation to the future usefulness of the child they often look for concrete results that shall bring immediate returns. "Mary left school in the sixth grade and she can bring home just as much money as Helen who made all that expense for another year to finish the seventh grade," is a characteristic comment given as conclusive proof that an added year in school has no practical value. A German father who had spent fifteen years as an unskilled laborer in the stockyards patiently and laboriously pondered the relative value of different courses offered in the elementary school and finally decided that even girls need a steady job. "Work with the hands is good," he explained, "and American education does not give it." A prosperous Bohemian who owns three tenement houses has four daughters who bear witness to the power of his authority by bringing home a weekly wage from department store and factory. Each girl was sent out to work at the age of fourteen years because the father firmly believed that, in the absence of vocational training in the schools, there is no other way of getting a mastery of any occupation. In 123, or 21 per cent, of the 585 families the parents expressed a desire for some definite training that should furnish either trade or business opportunities for girls. This is a small number. More than 50 per cent of these same families believe in trade and business training for boys. The skilled workers from the older countries lament the lack of opportunity to learn a trade in the public schools and willingly give their girls to tailors, dressmakers, and milliners to work for a nominal wage that merely covers the street-car fare, or even pay for places in the sewing trades because they do not know that apprenticeship as they conceive of it does not exist in America. Parents of this type are ready to make sacrifices for their children and frankly say that the need of money or the desire for larger gains would not stand in the way of continued schooling "of the right kind," as they phrase it.

d) Among the 900 families 805 feel an obligation to send their children to the parochial school for a part of their training. The

feeling arises from a deep religious conviction that conquers even those who recognize the greater practical value of the work of the public school. In many families the confirmation of the child is the triumphant end of his term of schooling, although this religious ceremony may take place at the close of the fourth or fifth grade. "She has finished school," is the simple reply to a challenge of the idle fourteen-year-old girl, or to the suggestion that more training would be advisable, but in the mind of both parents and child this statement relates to the confirmation only. An ideal is established therefore, based primarily on a religious conception of education which enables the parents to hold a consciousness of high achievement as the result of having met the minimum educational requirement of the Catholic church.

## 2. THE ATTITUDE OF THE MINORITY

Apart from the group of parents who from one motive or another accept the compulsory age limit as their educational standard is another group made up of those who look beyond the law. In 315 families one or more of the children had completed the elementary public-school course and in a few there was an ambition for high school or business college. Often fathers and mothers had a vague notion of putting their children "beyond their parents" and labored to that end with the patient hope that schooling would do it. Just how this was going to be accomplished they could not explain. As a Bohemian laborer of the stockyards expressed it, "People who have learned nothing do the dirty work of the world. I want my children to have a chance at a clean job. That's why I send them to school." At the birth of his first child, a little girl, a Polish carpenter bought an English dictionary and began paying for an encyclopedia on the instalment plan because he meant to educate his children and he knew that "educated people always have books around." A strong conviction that continued schooling would be best for the child sometimes conquered extreme poverty. An Irish mother denied herself sufficient food that she might pay the cost of sending two children to the high school, and it is not uncommon to find women taking in washing to meet the tuition of a six months' course in a business

college. We have seen that in the first group of 585 families, 422 are struggling with a poverty that makes the wage-earning child a probable necessity. Although the prosperous financial condition of the family is by no means a guaranty of a higher educational standard, broadly speaking again, when the father's wage is above the two-dollar-a-day limit there is less haste in getting the children into temporary occupations and a little more intelligent consideration of their future. In 180, or 57 per cent, of the 315 families the wage or income of the father alone is steadily above two dollars a day. For 92, or 51 per cent, of the 180 families the father's income is above \$825.00 a year; and \$825.00 a year, according to the standards of the neighborhood, is considered a very comfortable living. This emphasis is laid upon the position of the head of the family because in the majority of cases it is his earning power, and not a temporary income from boarders, lodgers, rentals, or the mother's work, that determines when the child shall leave school.

### 3. THE PREVAILING ATTITUDE IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

The educational standards of the foreign home as outlined above influence the future of both boys and girls, but in the stockyards district it is necessary to take into consideration a point of view that affects girls as a separate class. The fundamental idea that the education of the girl is a matter of much less importance than the education of the boy is accepted without question in all of the 900 families. A well-to-do Polish landlord who doubted the advisability of sending his fourteen-year-old daughter to the high school told with pride of the plans he had in mind for the university training of his son who was then playing in a kindergarten. A kindly and indulgent father, he had no reason for making this distinction except his negative attitude toward the education of women. "If a girl is very smart," said a Lithuanian mother, "it is well to keep her in school, but when she is not so she must make money before the marriage time comes." That marriage is the ultimate goal of the girl admits of no argument in the community. This state requires no special schooling and it will come

early in life. In the families hard pressed by poverty, the girl is made to feel that she must earn money enough to make some cash return for her bringing up. In the probable event of an early marriage, prolonging her school time shortens the period of her life when she is paying this debt. However, it does not follow that all girls are neglected. There are subtle influences that may temporarily obscure a fundamental ideal and give the girl a permanent advantage. Among those who completed the elementary-school course do possessed an unusual cleverness that enabled them to finish before the age of fourteen. The only daughter or the youngest girl in the family may be given the exceptional chance to extend her school life a year or more into the high school, not always from any definite conviction of the parents in regard to the needs of the girl but rather as a matter of indulgence. Especially is this true in families where the income is sufficient, \$825.00 a year or more, and there is a desire to protect the girl at home and keep her from the limited field of industry which a few parents now recognize is the only field open to the girl under sixteen years of age. Still the fact remains that in a community of comparatively low educational standards there is an underlying thought which both consciously and unconsciously assigns to the girl a position inferior to that of her brother.

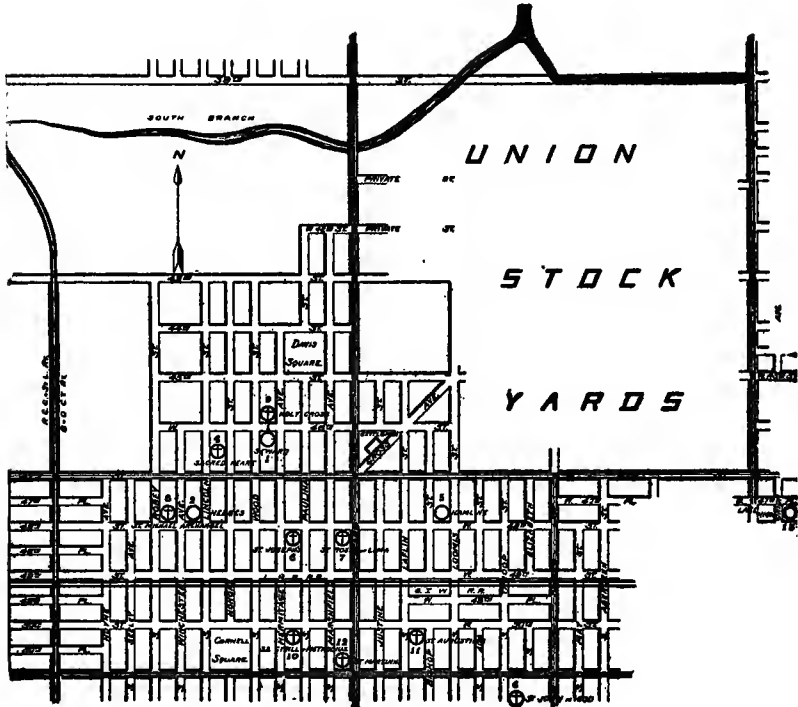
## SECTION II. THE LOCAL SCHOOLS

### I. PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

The 900 families live within the district boundaries of three public schools,<sup>2</sup> the Hamline, the Hedges, and the Seward. The combined membership of these schools at the close of September, 1912, was 1,273 boys and 1,222 girls. They are subject to the general course of study outlined for all of the elementary public schools of the city. Cooking and sewing are the only occupational subjects provided for girls and there are as yet no opportunities

<sup>2</sup> The Hamline School contains an open-air room, a dental room, and provides special instruction for subnormal children. The Seward School has two special rooms set apart, one for subnormal children, and one for truants and other children who need individual attention.





MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Seward Public School.                    | 8. St. Michael, Slovak Catholic School.                   |
| 2. Hedges Public School.                    | 9. Holy Cross, Lithuanian Catholic School.                |
| 3. Hamline Public School.                   | 10. S. S. Cyrill and Methodius, Bohemian Catholic School. |
| 4. Sacred Heart, Polish Catholic School.    | 11. St. Augustine, German Catholic School.                |
| 5. St. Joseph, Polish Catholic School.      | 12. St. Martinni, German Lutheran School.                 |
| 6. St. John of God, Polish Catholic School. | 13. Lake Public High School.                              |
| 7. St. Rose of Lima, Irish Catholic School. |   |

for vocational courses.<sup>1</sup> The Lake High School<sup>2</sup> offers the usual studies with the exception that the course in household arts is omitted owing to the lack of a sufficient number of girls to form classes in subjects designed to equip the homemaker. At the close of September, 1912, the membership was 459 boys and 307 girls. The one evening school of the neighborhood, which is open four evenings in the week for twenty weeks of the year, offers optional classes in cooking and sewing for girls over fourteen years of age and provides special instruction for foreigners who wish to learn the English language. It also gives all pupils who did not complete the eighth grade a chance to make up that loss. The total enrolment for the season closing March 13, 1913, was 511 men and boys and 102 women and girls.

Within this same boundary or closely adjacent to it there are nine parochial schools (eight Catholic and one German Lutheran) that draw pupils from the population of these public-school districts. At the close of September, 1912, the total membership<sup>3</sup> was about 5,722. No adequate information is on record of the work of the parish schools, of the relative amount of time spent in teaching the English language nor of the number of subjects which the pupils are required to accept in a foreign tongue. No study of the parochial school child has been made. In the absence of an exact card system which records the work of the pupil from the beginning to the end of his school life we have no data from which to draw conclusions. There is a constant movement between the public and the parochial school, and the number of years any child spends in each depends upon the family standards. Some ambitious parents appreciate the loss involved in the change and give to the parochial

<sup>1</sup> For the present the elementary industrial course for grades 6, 7, and 8 (adopted June 29, 1911) is offered only on the special permission of the superintendent and in districts where the demand is sufficient to call for four divisions of pupils.

<sup>2</sup> The Lake High School offers special vocational courses for over-age boys from grades 6, 7, and 8 of the elementary schools. Eighty boys were transferred to these courses in September, 1912. No such provision is made for girls. They may be admitted to the Lucy Flower Technical High School, but the distance which requires car-fare makes this school prohibitive for those whose need is greatest.

<sup>3</sup> The figures for seven of these schools are given in the official *Catholic Directory* for 1912. Membership by sex is not given.

school the minimum time required. To this group may be added many who are too poor to carry the burden of continued tuition. A large number are loyal to the parochial school as an institution and send their children to the public school only after confirmation. At present all that can be said in fairness is that in the problems of retardation and elimination the parochial school plays a part that has never been fully examined.

## 2. THE ADAPTATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TO THE NEEDS OF THE GIRL

The public-school teachers work under a serious handicap. In a community of low educational standards they are dealing largely with children who either have begun or must end their formal education in a parochial school, or at best are obliged to interrupt the public-school course with a year of absence. However, there are three legitimate methods of testing the success of the present school system: (a) the attitude of the girl to the school; (b) her continued interest in educational opportunities; (c) the extent of retardation and elimination.

a) *The attitude of the girl to the school.*—To what extent girls would be able to rise above the level of the home under a different school system cannot at present be estimated. That the school as it stands today has too little power in drawing their voluntary attendance is the conclusion based on the combined testimony of teachers, parents, and children. Of 300 girls who left school before completing the elementary course, 195, or 65 per cent, were below the seventh grade. Of the entire number only twelve went unwillingly, forced to do so by the purely commercial attitude of their parents. Two hundred and eighty-eight, or 96 per cent, had a more or less pronounced dislike of school, as shown by their trivial reasons for leaving and by the eagerness with which they welcomed the first opportunity to escape and go to work for a meager wage. Since the possession of an eighth-grade certificate is a matter of pride, it is not surprising to find a larger number among the so-called "graduates" who expressed a cheerful or even an enthusiastic attitude toward the school. There are certain types for whom the everyday life of the school runs smoothly. They are bright and

secure their promotions easily, they are sociable and find friends, they are tractable and submit to the discipline of a routine which, if sometimes irksome, is on the whole a part of a happy childhood. Of the 200 girls who are now proud of having completed the elementary course, 102, or 51 per cent, liked school. Ninety-eight disliked it and if they had been allowed to follow their own childish inclinations would have left at the earliest opportunity. The parents who compelled 98 girls to complete the eighth grade told many a tale of their trials. "Don't talk to me of high school," said a father. "It's been all I'm worth to drive my children through the first school." "My girls won't take education easily," explained the mother of three daughters with unconscious irony, "because they're all so strong they like something to do."

The girl's dislike of school is not grounded in any discriminating analysis of the situation, and her feeling is often exaggerated<sup>1</sup> by the natural restlessness of this period of youth which brings the desire for new fields of endeavor more alluring because remote and untried. To secure some understanding of the attitude of the older girl who has had her chance to gratify this childish longing the simple question, "What did you learn in school that has helped you to earn a living?" was put to 200 working girls of the first group and to 100 of the second group who are between sixteen and twenty-four years of age. One-half of the first group replied, "Nothing." The other half gave, in about equal proportion, reading, writing, arithmetic, and "English when it helps you to talk well." One thoughtful girl realized the gist of the matter when she said, "Nothing helps me much because I had so little of it." The vague notion that training of some kind might increase their earning capacity was revealed in a few answers. As one girl sadly put it, "After we get out and try working a couple of years we find we need something we haven't got. Maybe it's education. Whatever it is, we don't know how to get it." The 100 girls of the second group, being eighth-grade graduates and engaged largely in commercial work, gave the same list of studies

<sup>1</sup>One girl threatened to kill herself if she were forced to stay in school and cheerfully accepted the alternative of rising at six o'clock in the morning to be ready for a position in a tailor-shop where she could earn three dollars a week.

but emphasized the value of spelling and grammar. An effort was also made to discover whether education meant greater efficiency, joy in work, or any other satisfaction apart from money values. The revelations were pathetic. For the girls who had missed the benefit of the complete course the school was something altogether remote. It had taught them the "fundamentals," reading, writing, and figuring, which all agreed are a necessity in any position. Beyond this service the school was in no way related to the business of living as they had experienced it. The "graduates" invariably gave some credit to school discipline and training regardless of their feelings at the time when they were a part of it. A few had found pleasure in the mental activity of the high school or the business college. For the greater number a longer period in school meant an opportunity to enter that respectable form of occupation known as "the office job." These positions are held in exaggerated esteem throughout the entire neighborhood and, by giving a certain "upper class" quality to the girls who secure them, add to the value of the conventional requirements of the school.

It is not possible to draw exact conclusions from evidence of this character, yet it has a certain suggestive value. Judged by the personal feelings of girls, there is too little joy in the present formal processes of education. From the testimony of the older girls, it is evident that the school leaves but slight impression upon those who fail to receive the benefit of a complete elementary course.

b) *Continued interest in educational opportunities.*—It has been a widely accepted notion in the past that pupils may take advantage of the evening school to compensate in a measure for their failure to secure the needed training of the eight grades. The principal who has had ten years of experience in the evening school of the neighborhood states that few girls care for what he calls "regular class work." One wishes to make a shirt waist, another would like to trim a hat, a third asks for the teacher's help in fitting a skirt, and a few enjoy the sociability of a cooking class. The majority are seeking a pleasant evening, the free use of a sewing-machine, and some immediate practical returns for their time, but do not take kindly to technical instruction in any subject. During the past year two girls completed in the evening school the required

studies of the elementary course and at the present writing are candidates for the eighth-grade certificate. No other cases are on record. In the first group of 300 girls there are 18 who attended the evening sessions for one season. Only 15 have been willing to spend their evenings at the Settlement in cooking, sewing, or millinery classes. Two ambitious girls paid \$50.00 and \$60.00 respectively for special courses in sewing, one to a private dressmaker and the other to a "college of dressmaking." Of the three girls who went to business college, two gave it up before the end of the six months' course because of deficient preparation in English. The third, after spending six months in the college, and three months in searching for an opening, surrendered in bitter disappointment and went into a bookbindery, though she innocently insisted that she might have been a stenographer if anyone had been willing to give her a position. This is the record of 38 girls who made the effort to secure systematic training in some form after leaving school. For the remaining 262, when the school granted the work certificate it was equivalent to a dismissal from all active educational interests. It is evident that even the American-born girl of the community cannot make up for a deficient education by taking class instruction after working-hours.<sup>1</sup> Yet these girls are not stupid. They are<sup>2</sup> handicapped in many ways. Work from eight to ten hours a day taxes their strength; neither their ambitions nor their special aptitudes and interests have been stimulated to the point of making further attendance at school seem desirable. Moreover, the independent effort expected of those who voluntarily attend special classes is too often beyond their capacity because they have missed the training and discipline they should have received at an earlier age.

In the second group of 200 girls, 19 attended the Lake High

<sup>1</sup> The new compulsory education law of Ohio, in effect May, 1910, recognizes the need of part-time day schools for working children between fourteen and sixteen years of age who have not completed the eighth grade. Evening-school hours may not be accepted as a substitute.

<sup>2</sup> In his study of the educational status of working boys, Mr. Ristine found that "boys of the eighth grade were superior to those of the seventh, as were those of the seventh superior to the sixth" (*A report on Vocational Training in Chicago and in Other Cities by a Committee of the City Club of Chicago*, p. 277). As far as the writer knows, no similar tests have been given to girls.

School for periods ranging from three months to three years. (One remained three years, and six stayed two years.) Twenty-four were in the high school at the time this investigation was in process. Thirty-four went to business college for periods ranging from two months to one year. Five are in business college at the present writing. Five had given one winter to the evening school but not one had attended the domestic classes at the Settlement. This makes a total of 87 out of 200 in contrast to the 38 out of 300 who tried to take advantage of educational opportunities open to them after leaving the elementary school. This difference in favor of the eighth-grade graduate is due in part to a greater freedom from financial pressure, but in a larger measure to the school training that made a profitable continuation of any line of study possible.

c) *The extent of retardation and elimination.*—The recent conclusion that the instruction given in the eight grades of the elementary school is better fitted to the needs of the girl than to the nature of the boy is based upon Ayres's<sup>1</sup> investigation showing the relative distribution of boys and girls in the grades, and the greater percentage of retardation and elimination among boys. He finds that "retardation among boys in elementary schools is 13 per cent more prevalent than among girls"; also that "the proportion of girls who remain to the final elementary grade is 17 per cent greater than the proportion of boys who remain." Accepting the method of computation used by Ayres, Mr. Wreidt,<sup>2</sup> in his study of the public schools of Chicago, finds that for the city as a whole there is 15 per cent more retardation among boys than among girls and also that the percentage of girls in the first grade who remain to enter the eighth is 15 per cent greater than the percentage of boys. He accepts Ayres's conclusion that the present school system is "better suited to the needs of the girls than to those of the boys."

This conclusion is not wholly true for the district under consideration. The following tables present retardation and elimination figures<sup>3</sup> for three public schools.

<sup>1</sup> Ayres, *Laggards in Our Schools*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *A Report on Vocational Training in Chicago and in Other Cities by a Committee of the City Club of Chicago*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the age and grade records of pupils at the time of their first enrolment during the school year 1910-11. The method of computation is that used by Ayres

TABLE I  
PERCENTAGE OF RETARDED PUPILS AMONG BOYS AND AMONG GIRLS IN THREE  
LOCAL SCHOOLS

School	Boys	Girls	Difference in Favor of the Girls
Hamline.....	33.6	23	10.6
Hedges.....	26.6	21.9	4.7
Seward.....	34.6	32.8	1.8
Average of percentages....	31.6	25.9	5.7

In each school there is more retardation among boys than among girls. Since the average percentage of retardation is 31.6 among boys and 25.9 among girls, taking the percentage of retardation among girls as a basis, we find that retardation among boys is 22 per cent greater than among girls.

TABLE II  
PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS RETAINED TO THE EIGHTH GRADE IN THREE  
LOCAL SCHOOLS

Schools	Percentage of Boys Retained to the Eighth Grade	Percentage of Girls Retained to the Eighth Grade	Difference in Favor of the Boys
Hamline.....	30	27	3
Hedges.....	35.5	28.1	7.4
Seward.....	32	23.4	8.6
Average of Percentages....	32.5	26.2	6.3

In each school a greater percentage of boys than of girls is retained to the eighth grade, the difference in favor of the boys being 6.3 per cent. Taking the percentage of girls retained to the

in presenting the relative amounts of retardation and elimination among boys and girls in fifteen cities. The results differ slightly from those obtained by securing the percentage of retardation and elimination for the three schools together according to the method of computation used above to obtain the percentage for each school separately. The results obtained in computing retardation must vary according to the method employed and the time in the school year at which the statistics are gathered. Ayres has pointed out the difference between figures on record in September and those on record in June even in the same city; also the difference between figures gathered on the basis of total enrolment and those gathered at a given date in the school year.



eighth grade as a basis, we find that the proportion of boys who remain in school to enter the eighth grade is 24 per cent greater than the proportion of girls who remain. These figures show a condition for the three local schools the reverse of that revealed in other investigations in which a higher percentage of retardation is naturally followed by a higher percentage of elimination. Not all of the pupils retained to the eighth grade remain to complete the course. A count was made of the number of children who received eighth-grade certificates from the three schools during a period of six years. From September, 1906, to July, 1912,<sup>1</sup> 249 boys and 213 girls are so recorded. Judged by the extent of retardation, the tendency of the girls of the stockyards district is the same as that of girls everywhere. They are meeting the demands of the American public-school system more easily than their brothers. In spite of this fact, the percentage of elimination among the girls is greater than that found in Chicago as a whole and in other cities of which we have similar records.

It is not possible to push the logic of Ayres to the conclusion that these local schools retain to the eighth grade and also graduate a higher percentage of boys because the work offered is better suited to their needs. The explanation seems to lie in the educational standards of the community which, as we have seen, regard the education of the boy as a matter of more consequence than the education of the girl.

### SECTION III. THE GIRL AS A WAGE-EARNING CHILD

#### I. THE ATTITUDE OF THE PARENTS

The political and religious conflicts of the older nations have had little influence in determining either the character or the extent of immigration to the stockyards district. With few exceptions, these foreign people came to America with the hope of improving their financial condition. Many brought with them the simple

<sup>1</sup> During the same period 14 boys and 2 girls, who had previously graduated from the Seward or the Hamline schools, completed a four-year course at the Lake High School. One boy and one girl, both from the Hamline School, finished the two-year business course. No boy or girl from the Hedges School has completed any course at the Lake High School. No records were secured from the Catholic High School located at Wallace and Forty-fifth streets.

conviction that in the New World there are vast spaces in which may be found unlimited opportunities to work at relatively high wages. It must be remembered also that there is no economic surplus which makes the idle woman possible. From necessity neither women nor children are exempt from labor of some kind and there is no sentiment in the community that favors their existence as an unproductive class. The ever-present thought of the girl's early marriage renders the careful choice of an occupation unnecessary. As a natural result of this point of view, the immediate money value of any position open to little girls is too often the first consideration, in entire disregard of disastrous effects that may follow in the physical, mental, or moral life of the child. Yet the foreign mothers who appear to accept as a matter of course demoralizing conditions of employment for their daughters are not necessarily brutal in other relations with them. The women are vigorous, hard headed, and practical, and to them belongs the difficult task of making ends meet. Moreover, they are altogether ignorant of the city outside of their very limited round, for the majority who innocently send their little girls to look for work "down town somewhere" have never done a day's shopping beyond the two or three blocks on Ashland Avenue where the department stores supply all of their needs. Fathers too often have no knowledge of opportunities other than those of the packing industry where they are employed. Many a father who persistently refuses even in the face of poverty to secure a place for his daughter in the "Yards" because he has some understanding of the conditions there, will unwittingly expose her to greater dangers in remote industries of which he knows nothing. Men and women are facing unknown conditions, a strange language, and an unwonted freedom. They look back to their own childhood of early hard labor in the small village or the open field and justify the work of their children in the city factory. It is a complex situation for simple minds, and a confusion of standards is inevitable.

## 2. THE METHOD OF FINDING WORK

Since parents lack a constructive knowledge of the occupations open to their daughters, the girls are thrown upon their own limited

resources. The first information often comes from a neighbor's daughter who knows the wage of the beginner in the place where she herself is working. With this one fact only as a guide the girl may make an application in person with no thought of her fitness for the place and no knowledge that a vacancy exists. Assistance of this kind from friends or relatives can have no positive value without a point of view which they do not possess. The best employment offices do not care to handle child labor. Boys sometimes resort to them, but little girls, being less daring and more economical, will not promise the first week's wages for the sake of a position which others have found with no expense. The only intelligent assistance has come from a few school teachers who have voluntarily followed a limited number of children beyond the door of the schoolhouse, and from the Settlement, which has always made an effort to keep in touch with groups of young people. However, there is another factor to be reckoned with in the problem of supervision. The escape from the discipline of school often brings a sudden recognition of an unaccustomed freedom that may be used without question. Girls have been known to avoid the Settlement for fear of being advised to return to school, or of missing the chance to go to the heart of the city. Untrained girls of this age and type are essentially gregarious and they blindly follow this instinct. If one finds a place in a factory on the West Side of the city, a dozen others in her block will follow if possible in spite of the inconvenient distance and an altogether undesirable occupation. The haphazard way of finding work has its attractions and appears to offer wide opportunities. Day after day groups of little girls go the round of one factory after another, pitifully ignorant of a condition that makes the field of industry into which they seek an entrance always overcrowded with applicants of their kind, and feeling only a certain childish wonder and joy in the roar of a great city. Often they spend weeks following the incomplete and misleading advertisements of the newspapers, usually finding that the positions call for girls beyond their years and ability, and it is not impossible to find them walking up and down State Street, leaving a poorly written application for work at the several department stores and even stopping men and women with an eager request for "a job some-

where." In all this there is a pleasurable excitement if it does not last too long and a cheap position results from their wanderings.

In such a manner and with no preparation little girls go from the comparative protection of the school and the home to gain their first experiences as wage-earners. The opportunities for indiscretions and follies at the close of many such days of unguided freedom in a large city must not be underestimated.

### 3. WHERE THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAW FAILS

The first group of 300 girls contains 185 who found immediate occupation. (This does not mean steady employment.) Forty-two were taken out of school by busy mothers who demanded the sacrifice of the fourteen-year-old girl to the care of younger children. The remaining 73 were idle for periods ranging from four months to one year. Their record showed futile and unintelligent efforts to find work, repeated to the point of discouragement and exhaustion but relieved by weeks at home, for not one of the 73 girls thought of returning to school and not one was compelled to do so. They had taken out their "working papers," and so final is this legal possession of the work certificate that in spite of the failure to secure employment few girls<sup>2</sup> return to school after this certificate has been granted. Although the law calling for the alternative of school in the event of unemployment may be enforced when boys are concerned, it is practically a dead letter for the girls of the district because they may always put forth the officially honored excuse of being "needed at home," in spite of the fact that this usually means no positive training and many hours of idleness on the street. Omitting the 185 who succeeded in obtaining some kind of temporary position without loss of time after leaving school, there remain 115 for whom the work certificate meant a license to be idle regardless of the fact that they had failed to complete even the seventh grade of the elementary school. The defect lies both in the law and in the lack of machinery for enforcing it. As long as children are allowed the

<sup>2</sup> One of the truant officers of wide experience says it is impossible to make a successful court case of the girl after she is fourteen years of age. If the mother appears and swears that she needs the child at home the judge accepts this as "being employed."

independent possession of their working papers,<sup>1</sup> educational oversight in a large city is impossible.

#### 4. THE FAMILY NEED

The customary method of considering the entire income of the family at the time when the child leaves school in order to determine the extent to which the economic pressure is responsible for his leaving is likely to be misleading when applied to the people of the stockyards district. Many families will show for a period of two or three years an abundant income due entirely to the wages of several children. But it must be remembered that these same children did not grow up with this plenty nor are they going to remain long at home to add to the common purse. The older son who may be earning ten dollars a week makes larger personal demands as he nears his majority, and resents being asked to contribute what he considers an undue share to the family for no other reason than to prolong the education of a girl. The older daughter who is more capable of such sacrifices finds it difficult to surrender her desire for social pleasures to a kind of training for the younger children which she did not herself receive. The small sums a mother may earn by taking in either washing or boarders are often needed to meet some unusual drain upon the family like sickness or burial expenses. The income derived from rentals is usually applied on the mortgage and does not count in the apparent surplus, for at all times the need of keeping up the payments on a house outweighs the need of keeping a child in school. The following tables present the wage-earning power of the head of the family as the important steady economic factor in the lives of the 500 girls under consideration. For the men here represented there has been little variation in wages during the past eight or ten years except that due to the irregular employment common to the neighborhood. That is, the men who are now recorded at two dollars a day and less have been steadily in the ranks of those who can never command

<sup>1</sup> The Ohio law recognizes this fact effectively. In case the child is either dismissed or voluntarily withdraws, the employer is obliged to return the work certificate to the superintendent of schools. The return of the certificate at once calls attention to the fact that the child is not employed and must be followed by the truant or other special officer.

more even when opportunities to work are abundant, and who have never had a year of "full time." Wage-earners above this level include the more skilled workmen who have had fairly steady employment. Those considered "successful" can depend upon an income of \$825.00 a year and more. This last group is made up of skilled workmen, foremen, and small merchants (including saloon-keepers) who have made financial gains since they came to the neighborhood.

TABLE III

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE HEADS<sup>1</sup> OF FAMILIES WHO ALLOWED THREE HUNDRED GIRLS TO LEAVE SCHOOL BEFORE COMPLETING THE SEVENTH GRADE

Number of women <sup>2</sup>	Wage
62.....	Irregular: \$1.00 a day and less
Number of men	
112.....	Below \$2.00 a day
24.....	\$2.00 a day
47.....	\$2.01 to \$2.60 a day
21.....	Successful

TABLE IV

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE HEADS<sup>3</sup> OF FAMILIES WHO ALLOWED TWO HUNDRED GIRLS TO COMPLETE EIGHT GRADES

Number of women	Wage
25.....	Irregular: \$1.00 a day and less
Number of men	
37.....	Below \$2.00 a day
17.....	\$2.00 a day
47.....	\$2.01 to \$2.60 a day
63.....	Successful

The contrast needs little comment. If it is necessary for the head of the family to command with a fair degree of regularity over

<sup>1</sup> There is not an exact correspondence between the number of heads of families and the number of girls, since some families furnished more than one girl.

Although no effort was made to study racial characteristics, the following figures showing the nationality of the father given by the 300 girls are suggestive: Poles, 70; Germans, 89; Irish, 51; Bohemians, 43; Miscellaneous, 27; Slovaks, 20.

<sup>2</sup> The woman's wage is difficult to estimate. The figures do not mean that she never earns above \$1.00 in a given day. When the woman is thrown upon her own resources, her average earnings are usually between \$5.00 and \$6.00 a week.

<sup>3</sup> The following figures show the nationality of the father given by the 200 girls: German, 61; Bohemians, 58; Irish, 48; Poles, 13; Miscellaneous, 20.

\$2.00 a day in order to keep the children in school, then less than 26 per cent of the first group should be expected to do it. That this wage is one of the important determining factors seems evident from the 58 per cent of the second group who are above the \$2.00-a-day limit. The remaining 42 per cent represent families where ambition conquered poverty, where the mother took on the added burden of a supplementary wage-earner, or where the girl was able to complete her course either below or close to the age of fourteen years.

#### 5. OCCUPATIONS OPEN TO GIRLS UNDER SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE

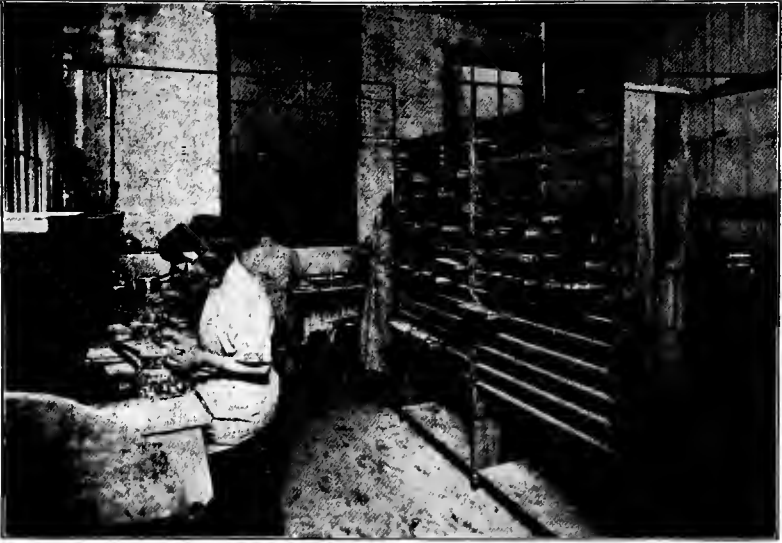
The little girls of the stockyards district are found in the factory, the bookbindery, the department store, domestic service, the sewing trades, typewriting and stenography, and occasionally in the laundry. The factory positions are those in which the quick and delicate touch of the girls' fingers are required. These include wrapping or packing all small articles like soap and toilet preparations, confectionery, chewing-gum, crackers, and chipped beef, or tending some of the simpler machines similar to those of a box factory. The bookbindery offers only mechanical work like sorting and folding, or operating a simple machine. The laundry has a few easy positions like shaking out clothes and marking them, but the other hand work as well as the operation of the machines requires the strength of the older girls. The department store stands next to the factory in the list of occupations accessible and considered desirable. Many little girls have a nervous dread of being near a factory machine, and to them the work in the store seems easy and attractive. Here there are places as cash girl, wrapper, assistant in the stockroom, or inspector. The girl under sixteen is seldom found in the position of clerk, but she often looks with envy upon the girl behind the counter and clings to her poor little job with the hope of advancement. Domestic service and the sewing trades furnish the ideal opening according to the simpler standards of foreign parents. From their point of view, the time-honored household occupations of women may be practiced outside of the home with dignity and a fair remuneration. The American-born girl does not accept this standard. Although the parents sometimes

prevail with the younger ones, the positions of the older girls prove that there has been a general tendency to leave domestic service and even the sewing trades to the immigrants. These last occupations are usually regarded as the time-serving of the apprentice who is learning a trade. A partial truth obscures the real situation which does not admit of any positive training to the child who is "minding a baby" and which often compels girls in a dressmaking establishment to spend months in clipping and pulling basting-threads or in delivering packages to customers.<sup>2</sup> The undue importance attached to the office position has been mentioned. This term may be used to dignify any kind of indoor routine in mercantile and other business establishments from folding circulars and addressing envelopes to typewriting.

It is difficult to classify the above positions either with reference to the relative amount of skill they require or by their opportunities for advancement. With the possible exception of stenography, typewriting, and some requirements of the office position, they represent what is by common consent looked upon as "girls' work." The boy is not found in these positions for three reasons: he scorns the low wage which the little girl endures as her birth-right; by nature he cares less for details and will not do his work with the same niceness and dexterity, and he seldom submits to the "speeding-up process" of the piece-work system which is common in factories and upon which the possibility of increased wages usually depends. The greater docility of the girl added to her temporary attitude toward any employment renders her an easy victim. No preparation is exacted for entrance into these occupations, little time is required in learning the simple processes or duties involved, and few of them lead to openings calling for skill beyond that of speed or mechanical dexterity. There are always a limited number who by strength of character, persistency, or the native possession of some unusual ability may rise to positions of responsibility. To what extent the above occupations open such opportunities will be revealed in the records of the older girls.

<sup>2</sup> A girl apprenticed to a milliner for one year spent her entire time in delivering hats. A Polish woman gave a tailor \$25.00 to secure for her daughter a year's training in his shop. At the end of six months the girl was still pulling basting threads as a preliminary to the instruction to be given later.





AT WORK IN A CANDY FACTORY



BOX FACTORY GIRLS



6. THE RELATION OF WAGE AND OCCUPATION TO GRADE

Although the first position a girl secures is so often a matter of accident, the relation of wage and occupation to grade as revealed in the following tables is suggestive.

TABLE V  
GIRLS BEGINNING WORK UNDER SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE  
SEVENTH GRADE NOT COMPLETED

KIND OF WORK	NO. OF GIRLS	BEGINNING WEEKLY WAGE BY OCCUPATION											
		\$ .50	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$6.00
Bindery.....	9	..	..	..	I	..	..	-2	I	3	I	I	..
Store <sup>1</sup> .....	63	..	..	I	II	..	23	16	9	2	..	I	..
Domestic.....	26	..	2	I	..	9	4	6	2	2	..	..	..
Factory.....	108	..	..	I	..	..	I	45	II	38	4	7	I
Laundry.....	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	I	I	3	..
Millinery.....	5	..	3	I	..	..	I	..	..	..	..	..	..
Office.....	13	..	..	..	..	..	2	I	2	..	7	I	..
Dressmaking.....	29	I	..	I	..	4	3	12	3	3	..	2	..
	258	I	5	5	12	13	32	83	27	51	6	21	2

<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting story current in the neighborhood of the morning when a little group of cash girls who had been working for \$1.50 a week banded together and refused to continue for less than \$2.00 a week. This juvenile "strike" was settled by a compromise which placed the wage in that store at \$1.75.

TABLE VI  
GIRLS BEGINNING WORK UNDER SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE  
EIGHTH GRADE COMPLETED

KIND OF WORK	NO. OF GIRLS	BEGINNING WEEKLY WAGE BY OCCUPATION										
		\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$8.00
Bindery.....	7	..	..	..	..	..	I	2	I	I	2	..
Store.....	28	I	..	..	4	8	4	4	2	3	2	..
Domestic.....	7	..	I	2	I	2	..	I	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	6	..	..	..	..	3	I	..	..	2	..	..
Hairdressing.....	1	..	..	I	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Millinery.....	3	..	I	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Office.....	22	..	..	..	..	I	I	4	2	10	4	..
Dressmaking.....	22	..	..	7	..	14	..	I	..	..	..	..
Stenographer.....	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	5	I
Typist.....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..
	107	I	2	10	5	30	7	12	5	21	13	I

Including the purely mechanical positions of the bindery and the laundry under the head of factory work, among the girls who did not complete the seventh grade the factory and the department store claim 185, or 71 per cent of the whole number. Sixty-two, or 50 per cent, of those included as factory workers began at a wage below \$4.00 a week. Fifty-five per cent of the department-store girls began at less than \$3.00 a week. The girls in the sewing trades who could begin above \$3.00 are exceptionally clever with the needle. The office position of this group does not mean either type-writing or stenography. The alluring wage of \$5.00 or \$6.00 a week is the highest point ever reached by the girl under sixteen in work of this character. In the total of 258 girls, 178, or nearly 69 per cent, began at a wage below \$4.00 a week. Only 11 per cent were able to begin above that point.

The second table shows the marked tendency which is always found in the eighth-grade girl to get away from factory work and seek employment where she thinks she is holding a position of higher social value. The factory and the department-store employ only 38 per cent of the whole number. Fifty-four per cent are in the sewing trades or in office positions. The domestic helper is also represented, due to the influence of the foreign home. In the total of 107 girls, 55, or 51 per cent, began at a wage below \$4.00 a week. Thirty-seven per cent began above that point.

These figures disclose the general trend. Judging solely from the beginning wage, the eighth-grade girls can earn more money. In so far as the apprenticeship and the office may lead to better opportunities than the factory or the store, the greater number have chosen their occupations with more insight.

It is difficult to estimate the actual money value of the girl's labor from beginnings only. The child's lack of judgment and love of novelty lead to frequent changes, and many seasonal and temporary places are open to her. Naturally this child-labor is the first to be dispensed with in the dull or slack season of any industry. The small candy-packer may be required only seven or eight months of the year, the sewing and the millinery apprentice in the fashionable shop gets her enforced summer vacation, and the important little office girl in a mail-order house is often laid off for a month after

the advertising circulars have been sent out. Only the department-store girls and the household helper seem to be in perpetual demand. The following table shows the real money value of 100 of the girls whose beginning wage is given in Table V. These girls were selected from the group because it was possible to follow their ups and downs for a year with a fair degree of accuracy. Moreover, they represent families who embrace the earliest opportunity to send their children to work and keep them employed. The weekly wage is estimated on the basis of the actual amount earned by the girl during the first year after leaving school. To show more clearly the exact contribution to the family income the amount the girl was obliged to spend each week in street-car fare was deducted.

TABLE VII  
AVERAGE WEEKLY CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY INCOME OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS DURING A WORKING-PERIOD OF ONE YEAR. STREET-CAR FARE IS SUBTRACTED

Age	Number	\$1.50	\$1.51-\$2.00	\$2.01-\$2.50	\$2.51-\$3.00	\$3.01-\$3.50
14-15.....	91	11	32	32	11	5
15-16.....	9	..	8	1	..	..
	100	11	40	33	11	5

Thirty-three of these children were driven before that family specter, the mortgage on the house.

The suggestion that girls should be legally forbidden to go to work under sixteen years of age brings out the old argument of the family need. It is put forth by thrifty parents and local politicians, by employers who wish an excuse for accepting children, and by charity workers struggling with the family problem of poverty. The school<sup>1</sup> has accepted the argument without questioning its real value and children have learned to make use of it. The law determines the amount of the widow's pension on the supposition that the fourteen-year-old child is a legitimate wage-earner. The

<sup>1</sup>The *Fifty-eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education*, city of Chicago, for the year ending June 30, 1912, voices the common sentiment and gives the need in the home as a reason for not recommending an amendment to the compulsory education law forbidding the employment of children at fourteen years of age.

ability of the child to add to the family income has been exaggerated and overemphasized. For these paltry sums they have been forced to exchange school time and play time, the natural rights of the child.

#### 7. SOME PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND MORAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

We have as yet no scientific knowledge of the physical effects of child-labor. We have certain recognized standards with reference to night work and the so-called "dangerous occupations" and a widespread public opinion that up to the age of fourteen years children should be allowed to develop their bodies in the freedom of the play activities most natural to them. Of the exact relation between the demands of the industries employing little girls and the actual power of the growing child to meet them without physical deterioration we know nothing with the certainty based upon scientific study. That there are several untabulated bodily injuries which result from their continuous employment in any one of the present occupations open to little girls in the city of Chicago no one who has observed girl-labor for any length of time can deny. More than one-half of these children who have come under the observation of the writer during the past eight years have been nervous, troubled with headaches, and "tired most of the time." This is a small number and is a record of confessions reluctantly given, for it is a significant fact that until the working-girl has suffered to the point where she can no longer conceal it, she will seldom admit poor health. "I am always well. I never lose time from sickness," are the persistent assertions of thin, anemic-looking little girls. This is a natural attitude resulting from their employment in industries which are usually making heavier demands upon the body than upon the brain, and every girl soon learns that the one thing she must not confess is physical weakness of any kind. That the very evident lack of vitality in many little girls was not due to any serious organic trouble was proved by the number of cases sent to a physician who merely prescribed "rest" or "a tonic," and by the rapidity with which they recovered if they were so fortunate as to be "laid off" for a few weeks, except in instances of extreme poverty where the mental anxiety more than offset the

recuperative value of a period of leisure. However, there is considerable evidence that the intermittent weeks of enforced idleness are all that save the majority of these girls from an earlier and a more complete physical deterioration than apparently takes place.

This group of girls furnishes no evidence that for them one form of occupation had been better or worse than another as long as they were employed "on steady time," that is, receiving a fixed weekly sum and not the uncertain wage of the pieceworker. The most pernicious side of factory work is the "speeding-up" process which strains every nerve and keeps the worker on a rack of anxiety. Some little girls acquired a premature wisdom as a result of their factory experiences and refused to go beyond a certain fairly comfortable speed limit which they established for themselves when the nature of the occupation permitted it and they were not forced to "keep up with a machine." Some of them found a pleasurable excitement in discovering just how "comfortable" they could be without losing their positions. Girls who held to a more even pace and never revealed their utmost capacity have endured the piecework system with less injury than those who were eager to respond to pressure. As there is often a difference of two or three dollars a week between what she accepts as her limit and what she can do "on a spurt," the temptation to earn more money may be accepted at a frightful cost of nervous energy. Mothers frequently give an additional incentive to increased speed by making their daughters' spending money and even necessary clothing depend entirely upon this extra sum. It is difficult to reach fair conclusions on the subject of piecework. Employers say that girls "don't hurt themselves." Girls testify that they are always in danger of having a cut in the rate of payment for a certain output if the girls who represent the highest speed begin to earn "too much money." When a cut in the rate is made they are forced to increase their speed or accept a lowered wage. Miss Goldmark concludes that although the system is sound in theory and "works admirably in highly organized trades where collective agreements assure the workers fair, fixed rates, it fails among the most helpless workers who most need to be protected from overpressure and the inroads of fatigue. With them it almost inevitably breeds a spirit of perma-

ment 'rush' in work, and to that extent it is physiologically dangerous."<sup>1</sup> It is this "rush" that the American temperament cannot endure. Factories that use this system are obliged to draw upon the more enduring vitality of the hardy immigrant.

The legal hours of labor are eight daily, but girls who seek the downtown factories and stores must allow at least two hours in addition for street-car rides. As they are obliged to go and return when all cars to and from the stockyards district are overcrowded, the fatigue of standing the greater part of the time must also be included in the day's work. The fact that local department stores can secure cash girls for \$1.75 a week is due in part to the number who cannot endure the nervous strain of getting down town and back again. The daily walk and the warm noon meal at home are all health-preserving factors, but as there are comparatively few local opportunities,<sup>2</sup> for the majority this street-car ride on their feet is inevitable. Of the 365 girls who began work under sixteen years of age 310 were obliged to ride distances consuming from two to two and one-half hours daily.

The non-educative character of all occupations open to these children is not the only negative side of the problem. Here again there is no proper basis for exact conclusions in regard to the mental effect of the child's work under the modern conditions of industry. Yet if the tendency is to an overstrain and fatigue detrimental to physical growth, it is not unreasonable to conclude that disastrous results both mental and moral may follow. Girls grow dull with a routine that calls for no exercise of brain power, and the general stupidity of which many employers complain is increased as the months go by. Noise and confusion, the whirl of factory machines, or the distractions of the department store make consecutive thought-processes difficult, and the unconscious reaction from monotonous labor is a desire for excitement in some novel form, the moving-picture show, the forbidden saloon-hall dance, or late hours with companions on the street after the day's work is over. The

<sup>1</sup> Josephine Goldmark, *Fatigue and Efficiency*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Judging from the records at the office of the state factory inspector, the entire packing industry seldom employs at any one time more than 100 girls under sixteen years of age. These positions are usually filled by the foreign girls.



fifteen-year-old factory girl who gave as her excuse for going to the five-cent theater six nights in the week her need of "something to make me feel rested" is not an exaggerated type but a painful illustration of the lack of nervous balance which is all too common among these children. Whether such an unstable condition is due to purely physical or to mental causes it is often difficult to say, since for many girls there is such a close connection between health and mental attitude. Girls are held to one miserable distasteful piece of work by fear, discouragement, timidity, or the lack of knowledge of other opportunities. A few have confessed that they thought all the factories down town made candy and there was nothing else for little girls to do except wrapping and packing confectionery. Some who had learned a single simple process in a box factory were unable to adapt themselves to other positions when laid off temporarily. One girl insisted that "pasting labels" was her "trade" and refused to consider anything else. Another said she could work only in the one department store in which she began. She had tried others but they always made her feel "strange and queer." Still another worked a full year in fear of the forewoman who had an "evil eye" that held girls to their work. A different type of girl makes a continuous effort to break through the limitations of her enforced occupation by changing as often as possible. These changes are a means of stimulation which the girl's nature demands. Three girls who were chums and refused to be separated had worked together in eleven different places during fifteen consecutive months. For them the mere thought of steady employment had grown distasteful. One girl flippantly remarked: "The new boss may have red hair. Anything to change the scenery." That the search for excitement as an antidote for fatigue and monotonous labor may be attended by grave moral dangers no one can doubt. Girls do not understand this abnormal craving. They are caught in the meshes of feelings too complex for their untaught minds to comprehend. Unfortunately both parents fail at this point. Many endeavor to exercise a strict surveillance that would keep the working girl at home in the evening "helping mother" as the safest outlet for any extra energy she may have. The diverse attitude on the part of parents and children in regard to the way

the leisure time should be filled is one of the greatest causes of family clashing. Here the girl usually conquers. Those who faithfully hold to a difficult and uncongenial occupation, bringing home the entire wage to the family and submitting to an almost patriarchal control in other matters, will demand a freedom in the use of their evening hours before which the foreign parents are helpless. "She is a good girl," said the Polish mother. "She brings home all her money, but—she goes out where she pleases nights and Sundays and we can't follow." Ninety per cent of the parents admitted that they had little control over their daughters in this matter. Many fiercely condemned "the American life" which made such insubordination possible. This unnatural position of the little girl, carrying the premature responsibility of the wage-earner and asserting her right to a feverish search for evening pleasures, is forced upon her at the beginning of the period marked by physical changes, rapid growth, and the dawn of sex consciousness when curious and misunderstood moods are dominant.

#### 8. THE ATTITUDE OF THE EMPLOYER

Interviews with employers revealed two points of view: (1) the labor of girls under sixteen years of age is of doubtful value to the employer and is not necessary to the continuation of any industry; (2) unless girls begin to work under sixteen years of age they do not get the necessary training that leads to their advancement and therefore the number of skilled workers among older girls will be depleted.

The first point of view has four causes: the eight-hour day, the general inefficiency of the girls who apply for work, the introduction of new machinery, and a growing sentiment against the employment of children. One of the common grievances which employers find it difficult to adjust is the difference in hours which causes jealousies and petty disturbances among girls not far below and just above the age of sixteen years. The girl who was sixteen last week will work out her full time cheerfully with seventeen-year-old companions but will be restless and dissatisfied if associated with a group six months younger having the advantage of an earlier dismissal. A surprising amount of supervision is needed to prevent the fraudulent

record of the child's age for which the employer alone is held responsible when the factory inspector appears. The inefficiency of the untrained mass which is recruited from the ranks of children who leave school below the seventh grade makes them a financial loss to any business or industry during the period required for their training. The amount of shifting adds to the work of the employment department. The superintendent in a large factory using over 300 little girls stated that they expected to register five girls in order to secure one who would feel any responsibility for reappearing to take up the work she had applied for. Even the girls who have finished the eighth grade are childish and cannot be given places of responsibility which the office requires. The introduction of machinery is displacing the need of many a small pair of hands. The inventions for covering, glueing, and labeling in the box factories are comparatively new and are pronounced satisfactory. The machine-dipped chocolate drops look almost as well as those covered by hand and are in greater demand. The clever devices for closing packages with the unfeeling points of a machine almost human in its skill are a monument to inventive genius. One of the largest employers of child-labor in the city of Chicago said: "If we could not by law employ the girl under sixteen years we should find some way to make the machine do her work."

Finally, there appears to be a growing sentiment against the employment of children in spite of the evidence of the school census taken May 2, 1912, which gives a total of 8,923 girls and 8,214 boys under sixteen years of age either temporarily or permanently employed in the city of Chicago. A sentiment is a difficult thing to measure in figures until it reaches a definite expression in legislation. Yet the feeling exists, voiced all along the line by the head of the firm, the superintendent, the business manager, and the foreman, often in the face of the actual fact that the practical policy of the business or the industry allowed the use of children. The proposition to exclude the girl from early employment met with a quick response from employers who look at the boy from a different point of view. The frankest words came from the president of a large manufacturing establishment: "As an employer, I can and do make money out of the work of little girls. As a man, I know it

would be better for them and for the state if I were forbidden by law to employ them."

The second point of view, that the girl must get her training for business or industrial efficiency by going to work at the earliest age possible, is advanced by employers who find temporary help a convenience and by those who wish the speed and skill that come with the repetition of a single highly specialized process. They are looking for a very limited efficiency which may be acquired only by practice in the business or industry calling for it and they know that youth is the golden age of this kind of skill. They do not ask for a longer period in school or for any form of industrial education to fit girls for their positions. "Give us girls who are quick, bright, and healthy and we will do the training," is their demand. Their further suggestion that the supply of skilled adult workers will be lessened if girls do not receive this early training is without proof.<sup>1</sup>

These advocates of child-labor could not fail to refer to the family poverty that apparently can be relieved only by the work of children. Three went so far as to say that they engaged girls under sixteen solely because the families represented were in need. And yet when it came to the final question, no employer would admit that either the business or the industry he represented rested upon so slight a foundation as the labor of little girls. One conclusion at least seems permissible: the premature employment of girls under sixteen years of age is not necessary to the continuation of any business or industry.

<sup>1</sup> Considering the present seemingly unlimited supply of young unskilled immigrant labor, it is impossible to predict the effect upon the adult worker of the complete elimination from all forms of industry of girls under sixteen. If the period these girls now spend in idleness or in worse than unprofitable employment were utilized in learning a trade, acquiring some efficient knowledge of a business office, or even in the so-called cultural studies (which it is the tendency of the moment to undervalue), there is little doubt that the two years so spent would add to their wage-earning capacity, since there seems to be no oversupply of skilled labor in the trades and occupations open to women today. It is not necessary to attempt a radical prophecy on the economic side of the question. The main point is that no community can afford to tolerate a system that means physical, mental, and moral deterioration to the growing girl.

SECTION IV. THE WORKING-GIRL

I. RECORDS OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

In order to throw more light upon the situation outlined above it is necessary to record the progress of the girl for a number of years. The following tables give the facts concerning one hundred girls who left school before completing the seventh grade. They were either sixteen or seventeen years of age at the time of the last interview.

TABLE VIII

THE FIRST POSITION OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE								
		\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00
Bindery.....	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1
Store.....	29	1	2	..	8	7	5	3	..	3
Domestic.....	4	..	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	..
Factory.....	40	..	..	..	1	18	7	11	1	2
Laundry.....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Office.....	7	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	6
Dressmaking.....	3	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2
Tailor.....	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..
Telephone.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Yards.....	9	..	..	..	..	1	..	5	2	1
	100	1	2	1	10	29	13	22	4	18

Sixty-one of these girls began work at fourteen, twenty-six at fifteen, and thirteen (who had been helping at home) at sixteen years of age. No sixteen-year-old girl received less than \$4.00 a week. One of them was able to qualify for the telephone service, which does not accept girls under this age. Her wage of \$5.00 represents the amount paid to the beginner while she is taking class instruction. With this exception, the girls are found in the positions previously discussed, the factory and the department store being the only means of entrance to industry known to the majority. Fifty-six per cent began at a wage of less than \$4.00 a week.

Some indication of the amount of shifting that is common to the untrained working-girl may be gained from Table IX. A change of position does not always imply a change in the character



of the occupation, since there may be reasons for leaving one candy factory in favor of another or for exchanging the store down town for one near at hand. The three girls, each one of whom had worked in eleven different places, represent one extreme, yet the fact that only twenty-six had held to the first position secured is proof of the restlessness and dissatisfaction which must result from the accidental way of getting started. The figures just above the broken diagonal line show the number of girls still in their original occupations regardless of the number of times they may have changed employers. The three girls who began in a bindery are now in the store, the factory, and the yards. Only thirteen of the twenty-nine who began in the store are holding to it as a permanent choice. The others found the factory, the laundry, the office, the sewing trade, the telephone, and the yards more congenial places. The four girls beginning as domestic helpers scattered to the bindery, the store, the dressmaking shop, and the yards. Of the forty girls who dropped into the factory for their first experience, thirty have not changed occupation, although only seven have remained in the original factory. Three factory girls have risen to office positions. One office girl found her first choice an impossible one and was obliged to fall back to the factory. So the shifting goes on with the hope and some possibility of better adaptation through experimenting in different places. But the significant fact is that although seventy-four changed positions, only thirty-nine succeeded in changing the occupation, and among the latter some of the migration, as from the yards to the factory and back again, should not be regarded strictly as a change of occupation, since this may mean only the difference between packing dried beef in a tin can and putting peanut candy in a paper box.

Ninety-two of this group have a wage of \$6.00 a week and less. The most significant thing brought out by personal interviews was the lack of hope for the future in these occupations. Eighty out of the ninety-two said they could see little chance for advancement. Two girls in the telephone service, three in the sewing trades, six in stores, and one clever in the piece-work of a hammock factory felt sure they could "work up to something." The eight girls receiving above \$6.00 a week also expected promotion. This

makes a total of twenty out of one hundred girls who were working with enthusiasm and some joy in the daily occupation. The 80 per cent accepted with varying degrees of patience and rebellion a situation they could not control. Adding the positions in the

TABLE X  
PRESENT WAGE AND PRESENT OCCUPATION OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE								
		\$3.00	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$7.50	\$8.00
Bindery.....	5	..	..	..	I	I	3	..	..	..
Store.....	16	I	3	2	6	..	3	..	..	I
Factory.....	39	2	11	I	18	2	3	I	..	I
Laundry.....	5	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	..	..
Office.....	11	..	2	..	4	I	2	..	2	..
Dressmaking.....	4	I	I	..	I	..	..	I	..	..
Telephone.....	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..
Yards.....	18	..	3	2	10	I	2	..	..	..
	100	4	20	5	40	5	18	4	2	2

laundry, the yards, and the bindery to those of the factory, 67 per cent are found in monotonous occupations, wrapping and packing confectionery, butterine, soap, dried beef, and biscuits, or attending the machine processes involved in the washing and ironing of clothes or in the manufacture of books and boxes, hammocks, and cheap ready-made clothing.

## 2. RECORDS OF FIFTY GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

Thirteen of these girls (see Table XI) began work at fourteen, fifteen at fifteen, twenty at sixteen, and two at seventeen years of age. Only three of the twenty-two who had passed the sixteenth birthday received less than \$5.00 a week. Again the choice of the eighth-grade girl is apparent. Sixty-two per cent are found in office positions, in the sewing trades or with the Telephone Company. Only 22 per cent began at a wage below \$4.00 a week.

The lack either of adjustment or of ability to find the first choice in occupations is less evident (see Table XII). Still there is some



shifting in this group. The domestic helper preferred the store and the factory. Only two of the seven factory girls accepted their positions as permanent. Three who received their first experience in a store turned to housework, factory, and office. Seven routine office girls advanced to the higher positions of the typist and the stenog-

TABLE XI  
THE FIRST POSITION OF FIFTY GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE							
		\$1.50	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$8.00
Bindery.....	3	..	..	..	..	I	I	I	..
Store.....	7	..	..	I	2	3	I	..	..
Domestic.....	2	I	..	I	..	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	7	..	..	I	2	..	3	I	..
Millinery.....	I	..	..	I	..	..	..	..	..
Office.....	15	..	..	..	..	I	10	4	..
Dressmaking.....	3	..	I	I	..	I	..	..	..
Stenography.....	9	..	..	..	..	..	2	6	I
Telephone.....	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..
	50	I	I	5	4	6	20	12	I

rapher, and three, finding they could not hold their places, went into the store, the factory, and the yards. Thirty changed positions but only twenty-three changed occupations, and with three exceptions these changes were in line with the girl's choice and ambition.

Only twenty-one girls receive a present wage of \$6.00 a week and less (see Table XIII). All below \$8.00, except the domestic helper, feel that they are in line for promotion. The thirteen who can earn from \$8.00 to \$10.00 are not sure of their ability to advance beyond their present positions but they are fairly contented. It is evident that the factory, domestic service, and the sewing trades do not furnish the places considered desirable by the eighth-grade girl after she is old enough to choose for herself. The common labor of the stockyards is literally tabooed. The only girl employed there "candles eggs," a work requiring some skill and offering a chance for promotion. Sixty-two per cent are with business firms doing some kind of office work, or in the service of the telephone company.

TABLE XII  
PRESENT OCCUPATION IN RELATION TO ORIGINAL OCCUPATION OF FIFTY GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE  
WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

ORIGINAL OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF GIRLS	NUMBER OF POSITIONS						PRESENT OCCUPATION											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	Bindery	Store	Domestic	Factory	Millinery	Office	Dressmaking	Stenography	Telephone	Typist	Yards	
		1	2	3	4	5	6												
Bindery.....	3	1	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Store.....	7	3	1	..	..	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Domestic.....	2	..	1	..	..	..	1	1	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	7	3	3	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..
Millinery.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Office.....	15	6	6	2	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dressmaking.....	3	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	..
Stenography.....	9	3	1	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	..	..	..	..
Telephone.....	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..
	50	20	15	8	2	4	1	6	1	1	5	1	8	3	14	5	4	1	1

PRESENT WAGE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE

WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF GIRLS
\$8.00 to \$10.00 inclusive.....	13
	30
\$6.00 to \$7.50 inclusive.....	24
	7
Below \$6.00 .....	74

The 50 girls shown in the white sections completed the Eighth grade.  
 The 100 girls shown in the lined sections did not complete the Seventh grade.  
 It has been shown that a comparatively small number of girls complete the eight grades. It was impossible to secure equal numbers for comparison and retain the same neighborhood surroundings.

TABLE XIII

PRESENT WAGE AND PRESENT OCCUPATION OF FIFTY GIRLS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE								
		\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$6.25	\$7.00	\$7.50	\$8.00	\$9.00	\$10.00
Bindery.....	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Store.....	6	..	2	2	..	2	..	..	..	..
Domestic.....	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	5	..	..	3	..	1	1	..	..	..
Millinery.....	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
Office.....	8	..	3	2	..	2	1	..	..	..
Dressmaking....	3	1	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	..
Stenography....	14	..	..	2	1	1	..	3	2	5
Telephone.....	5	..	..	..	..	4	..	1	..	..
Typist.....	4	..	..	3	..	..	..	1	..	..
Yards.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..
	50	2	5	14	1	11	4	6	2	5

3. RECORDS OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

The records of the older girls were studied to see whether time gave them a mastery over any occupation in spite of their lack of schooling.

TABLE XIV

THE FIRST POSITION OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE													
		\$.50	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$6.50
Bindery....	7	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	2	1	2	..	..	..
Store.....	28	..	..	..	2	..	10	7	6	1	..	2	..	..	..
Domestic...	13	..	1	..	..	4	2	5	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Factory....	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	1	4	1	2	..	..	1
Laundry...	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..
Millinery...	5	..	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..
Office.....	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	3	1	..	..	..
Dressmaking	4	..	..	1	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tailor.....	5	1	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Yards.....	17	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	8	..	4	..	1	..
	100	1	2	2	3	7	14	24	7	19	2	16	1	1	1

TABLE XV  
PRESENT OCCUPATION IN RELATION TO THE ORIGINAL OCCUPATION OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

ORIGINAL OCCUPATION	NUM. PER OF GIRLS	NUMBER OF POSITIONS											PRESENT OCCUPATION										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	15	Bindery	Store	Domestic	Factory	Laundry	Millinery	Office	Dressmaking	Tailor	Telephone	Waitress	Yards
		1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	15	4	12	1	5	2	4	2	4	3	1	0	1
Bindery.....	7	1	2	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Store.....	28	4	7	7	3	2	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	
Domestic.....	13	..	..	1	3	2	4	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	
Factory.....	14	3	4	..	4	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Laundry.....	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Millinery.....	5	2	..	1	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Office.....	5	2	2	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Dressmaking..	4	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Tailor.....	5	..	1	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	
Telephone.....	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	..	..	
Waitress.....	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Yards.....	17	5	4	1	1	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
TOTAL.....	100	16	23	16	13	12	10	3	3	1	3	9	18	4	24	3	4	6	6	3	2	1	20

Eleven girls (see Table XIV) began work before they were fourteen. Fifty-eight were just fourteen, nineteen were fifteen, and twelve were sixteen years of age. Only five of the sixteen-year-old girls began below \$5.00 a week. The department store, and the factory type of occupation (including the bindery, the laundry, and the yards) gave 68 per cent of this group their first experience as wage-earners. For 60 per cent the beginning wage was less than \$4.00 a week.

The ten girls who have moved from eight to fifteen times and the sixteen who held to the first position (see Table XV) represent the opposite extremes in temperament. The same kind of shifting in search of better adaptation or more congenial employment is marked in this group. Only twelve of the twenty-eight who began in the store found it the best final choice. Twelve of the thirteen domestic helpers scattered to six different occupations. One each from the bindery, the store, and the factory sought domestic service as a relief from the nervous strain of their downtown work. Three of the five girls ambitious for office positions were obliged to fall back upon the bindery and the factory, and four from the store, the factory, and the yards felt promoted when they secured places as office girls. Eighty-four changed positions and fifty-four changed occupations.

TABLE XVI

PRESENT WAGE AND PRESENT OCCUPATION OF ONE HUNDRED GIRLS FROM  
EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO DID NOT  
COMPLETE THE SEVENTH GRADE

KIND OF WORK	NUM- BER OF GIRLS	WAGE												
		\$3.00	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$6.50	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$8.50	\$9.00	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00
Bindery.....	9	..	..	1	..	5	..	..	2	..	1	..	..	..
Store.....	18	..	..	3	..	2	1	4	7	..	..	1	..	..
Domestic.....	4	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	24	..	..	3	..	10	..	4	5	..	2	..	..	..
Laundry.....	3	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Millinery.....	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	1	..	..
Office.....	6	..	..	..	..	1	..	4	..	..	..	1	..	..
Dressmaking..	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	2	1	1	..
Tailor.....	3	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Telephone.....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..
Waitress.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Yards.....	20	..	..	7	1	6	..	4	2	..	..	..	..	..
	100	1	1	15	1	27	1	19	22	1	6	4	1	1

Forty-five of this group receive a wage of \$6.00 a week and less in contrast to the ninety-two of the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old group. It is evident that time may add something to the wage-earning power of girls of this class especially among those who possess physical strength and certain stable qualities that make them desirable. Of the eleven girls who began work under fourteen years, six now receive \$8.00 a week and above. Of the twelve who waited until sixteen to take the first position, only three receive \$8.00. The girls who began at fifteen are not ahead of the average wage of those who began at fourteen. From the vantage point of money only, there is apparently no gain for the girl who, leaving an unfinished school course at the age of fourteen, spends a year or two in idleness before entering any one of the occupations open to her. The lack of hope for the future was voiced by the majority in this group. Forty-one said they had little chance of getting beyond the \$6.00 a week limit. Seventeen girls at \$7.00 a week, twenty-two at \$8.00, four at \$9.00, four at \$10.00, and one at \$11.00 said they had apparently reached the highest wage paid for the kind of work they are doing. Of the remaining eleven who look for promotion, two are with the Telephone Company, three are in the sewing trades, three in stores, and one each in laundry, bindery, and office work. It is an interesting fact that of the thirty-five girls who receive \$8.00 a week and above, twenty-seven held to the original occupation chosen. The nineteen-year-old girl who is now worth \$10.00 a week the year round in a millinery shop began as an apprentice at \$1.00 a week. Having completed the fifth grade, she left school on her fourteenth birthday with a fixed determination to learn to trim hats. In the absence of school training, it is possible for ambition, persistency, and manual skill to win recognition when the child is so fortunate as to have some comprehension of her own fitness or desire for a certain kind of work which is at the same time within her reach. For the majority there is no such adaptation. The forty-one who cannot rise above \$6.00 a week and the seventeen who came to a final stop at \$7.00 lack any positive training to enable them to take better positions, although they are not without native capacity. Adding the work of the bindery, the laundry, and the yards to that of the factory, 56 per cent are found in the monotonous

occupations that have been considered. Remembering the 67 per cent of the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old girls, we conclude that there is a tendency to get away from the factory type of occupation whenever it is possible.

4. RECORDS OF FIFTY GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

TABLE XVII

THE FIRST POSITION OF FIFTY GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE										
		\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$7.00
Bindery.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Store.....	18	1	..	..	4	6	..	2	1	2	..	..
Domestic.....	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Factory.....	3	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	1	..	..
Millinery.....	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Office.....	16	..	..	..	..	1	..	3	2	4	5	1
Dressmaking.....	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stenography.....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
Telephone.....	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..
Typist.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
	50	1	1	4	4	8	4	6	3	12	6	1

Only fourteen in this group began work at fourteen years of age. Twenty-three were fifteen, ten were sixteen, and three were seventeen years old. The tendency of the eighth-grade girl is to extend the period of her schooling beyond the compulsory age limit. Fifty-two per cent chose the office position, the sewing trades, or the Telephone Company. Forty-four per cent were obliged to accept a beginning wage of less than \$4.00 a week.

Again there is a lack of adjustment between the girl and the first position (see Table XVIII). Only seven of the girls who began in the store accepted that occupation as the one best suited to them. Three girls from the store, two from the factory, one from the routine office, and one who wished to be a milliner sought the telephone service and the two domestic helpers went to the store. One who served her apprenticeship in a dressmaker's shop escaped to find more rapid advancement in a factory. Thirty-six changed



TABLE XVIII  
PRESENT OCCUPATION IN RELATION TO ORIGINAL OCCUPATION OF FIFTY GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

ORIGINAL OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF GIRLS	NUMBER OF POSITIONS								PRESENT OCCUPATION									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Bindery	Store	Domestic	Factory	Millinery	Office	Dressmaking	Stenography	Telephone	Typist
Bindery.....	1		1							0	1								
Store.....	18	1	5	5	3	1	2		1	7		0	2		5	1		3	
Domestic.....	2		1					1			2				1				
Factory.....	3			1	1								0		1			2	
Millinery.....	1		1											0					
Office.....	16	8	4	2	1	1					1				8	1	4	1	1
Dressmaking.....	2		1										1			1	2		
Stenography.....	2	1																4	
Telephone.....	4																		
Typist.....	1				1												1		0
	50	14	13	9	6	2	4	1	1	0	11	0	3	0	14	3	7	11	1

positions and twenty-eight changed occupations. All except two of these changes were in line with the girl's ambition and preference.

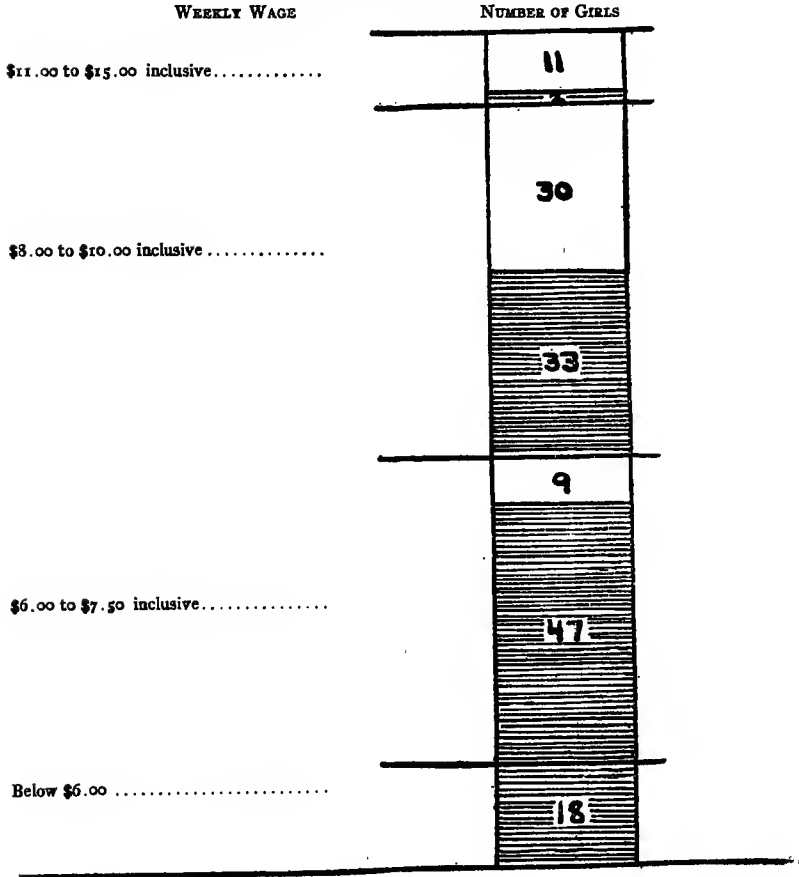
TABLE XIX

PRESENT WAGE AND PRESENT OCCUPATION OF FIFTY GIRLS FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE WHO COMPLETED EIGHT GRADES

KIND OF WORK	NUMBER OF GIRLS	WAGE								
		\$6.00	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$9.00	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$15.00
Store.....	11	1	2	5	1	1	..	..	..	1
Factory.....	3	..	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..
Office.....	14	..	1	3	3	3	3	1	..	..
Dressmaking.....	3	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Stenography.....	7	..	2	..	1	..	1	..	1	2
Telephone.....	11	..	1	..	3	6	1	..	..	..
Typist.....	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
	50	1	8	9	11	10	6	1	1	3

Only one is receiving \$6.00 a week in contrast to the twenty-one of the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old group at a wage of \$6.00 and less. The lowest wage is received by a girl who was sixteen years old before beginning to work, but she had no training beyond that of the eighth grade. Of the three girls representing the highest wage of \$15.00, one spent a year and a half in the high school, added to this a six months' course in a business college, and was nearly seventeen when she took her first place as a stenographer. The second girl had no high-school training, but took six months in a business college. The third waited until she was nearly sixteen before beginning as a department-store cash girl at \$3.00 a week and rose rapidly to \$15.00 through the plan of receiving a commission on sales. Of the twenty-one girls who are receiving \$10.00 a week and above, ten spent from six months to two years in some additional training. Of the twenty-nine below \$10.00, one took a two-year course at the high school, one spent one year there, and four had six months' courses at the business college. Conclusions from so small a number are not final, but it is a significant fact that ten out of the twenty-one girls earning \$10.00 a week and above have reached this point apparently through the help of some training

PRESENT WAGE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY GIRLS EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE



The 50 girls shown in the white sections completed the Eighth grade.  
 The 100 girls shown in the lined sections did not complete the Seventh grade.

added to the work of the eighth grade. All who are receiving less than \$8.00 a week expect promotion. With the exception of the eleven telephone girls who advance according to a regular schedule based on length of service, and one stenographer at \$9.00 who hopes to reach \$15.00, the others have probably reached their limit. However, without an exception, the fifty girls have a sense of satisfaction in their positions that can be appreciated only by understanding certain neighborhood standards. The stockyards wage of \$6.00 a week for the common labor of women and girls (this makes no allowance for the intermittent employment that lowers the average or for the piecework that may add to it in busy seasons) dominates the community to such an extent that any position above \$6.00 puts a girl a little above the common lot. Positions from \$8.00 to \$15.00 are distinct personal triumphs. The occupations also illustrate the ambition of the eighth-grade girl. Sixty-six per cent are with business firms doing some kind of office work or in the service of the Telephone Company. This is a slight addition to the 62 per cent of the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old eighth-grade girls who are engaged in occupations of the same character.

##### 5. PROBABLE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WORKING-GIRL

The employer who is questioned with reference to the opportunities open to girls in the particular business or industry he represents invariably replies, "It all depends upon the girl," and points to his private secretary who rose from \$5.00 a week to \$80.00 a month, to his rapid piece-worker who commands \$15.00 a week in the rush season, to the single forewoman who began as a little candy-packer, or to the head clerk who was once a fourteen-year-old cash girl. The element of truth in this point of view, which is pre-eminently optimistic and American, obscures the real facts of the industries that are constantly renewing their supply of low-grade and unskilled labor. The 80 per cent in the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old group and the 41 per cent of the older group who see little chance of getting beyond \$6.00 a week represent a real demand of our present methods of production and distribution. A large number of girls must continue in monotonous, highly special-

ized occupations requiring no education and little intelligence. The supply is constant from the untrained mass who are driven to some temporary means of earning money, for although the girl in industry may be a transient factor as an individual, each one who leaves is at once followed by more than one successor entirely willing to take the vacant place at the same wage. "The room at the top" is made for those of special manual dexterity or some native ability that makes opportunity. The girls in the factory, the bindery, and the yards who receive more than \$6.00 a week attain the higher wage only through the piecework system. Many girls are forced to lessen the nervous strain attending piecework by changing factories, and securing another kind of monotony in their daily labor. This means beginning with a lowered wage and acquiring a new skill. Others hold their places in rush seasons only and plan to be idle three or four months of the year. By far the greater number, after some experience, learn to set a pace they are able to keep without excessive fatigue. The girls of this last class average from \$7.00 to \$8.00 a week. In brief, the opportunity in the factory type of occupation depends upon the efficiency that means speed, and the girl does not earn *for any length of time* the high wage used by the employer to illustrate the advantages of the system. Judging from the positions of the two hundred girls, who fairly represent the general situation, 61 per cent of the girls of the stockyards district who leave school before completing the elementary course will find their places in this factory type of occupation. The possibility of securing one of the few executive positions open to girls should be mentioned. Only one girl has been found who attempted to hold the place of forewoman, and after a few weeks she fell back to her familiar piecework. More than one employer testified to the difficulty of finding competent forewomen among the rank and file of workers whom they would willingly promote. The reasons are obvious. The untrained mind which can easily grasp all the requirements of the piecework system fails when it comes to meeting the demands of even a subordinate executive position. The daily work offers no chance for mental development. Moreover, the inferior rank assigned to the girl is not conducive to the growth of initiative and self-assertion.

Comparatively few of the American-born girls remain in the sewing trades in spite of the fact that dressmaking and millinery are among the largest industries at present open to women. This is due chiefly to the methods in the shops which prolong the period of apprenticeship and give small opportunity to the learner. The dressmakers are calling for girls who have had some training at least in plain sewing. The foreign girls come better prepared, but it is a curious fact that the mothers, many of whom are capable of beautiful needlework, do not succeed in teaching their American daughters the same art. The schools have done comparatively little and the result is the untrained girl who enters the shop for errand work grows tired of it before she has had a chance to do much else, and leaves for some position that seems to promise more rapid promotion. As a rule it requires from two to three years to reach a wage of \$7.00 or \$8.00 a week, and the girl must be a good observer and quick to take casual suggestions, for she will get little real teaching. Yet there are always good positions waiting for those who persist through the beginner's time-serving and learn to be one of the specialized workers. The same difficulties confront the girl who wishes to be a milliner, and even those who felt attracted to this trade and undoubtedly possessed enough ability to reach the average wage of \$10.00 or \$12.00 a week have been turned aside because they could not get a start. The girls in the tailor establishments were scheduled apart from the other sewing trades because all who receive above \$6.00 a week are a part of the piece-work system possible in this industry through the minute subdivision of all the processes involved. The opportunities in this work, like those in the factory, depend upon the speed of the worker.

Domestic service is by common consent the least desirable of all the occupations. The eighth-grade girl will take any kind of factory work in preference, much as she dislikes the latter. Of the five girls so employed, only one is contented. The other four were forced to it after a period of overwork in store, bindery, and factory that made a change a physical necessity. A full presentation of the domestic-service situation is not possible here, but a few reasons may be given to account for the prevailing attitude. There is no

real preparation available for the majority of these girls. The mothers cannot give any systematic training that would make their daughters valuable in an American household and the bi-weekly cooking-class for one school year offers the only bit of instruction open to them. The fourteen- or fifteen-year-old child is of little service to the employer who cannot accept her in her untrained state and act as a teacher. It is little wonder that the girl who is placed at a low wage to help with "light housework" or "mind a baby" proves unsatisfactory in a position that requires more maturity and good sense than the factory demands. Moreover, the early age of her employment makes it difficult for the girl to leave home and accept the isolation of the average domestic helper. Since there is little chance to begin under acceptable conditions, the logical result is the adaptation to other occupations easily accessible, which allow the child to live at home where she naturally belongs at her age. The definite duties and fixed hours combined with the greater sociability of every other occupation are more attractive to youth. The years do not bring either opportunity or inclination to acquire enough knowledge of household arts to enable these girls to hold good positions. Finally, the American-born girl, so close to the foreign home, holds tenaciously to her conviction that domestic service is un-American, an inferior kind of work that must be left to "foreigners." How far the employers of household labor are responsible for the attitude of mind that makes this occupation so universally undesirable may be left an open question.

The department store stands next to the factory as a low-grade entrance to employment, but more than half of those who begin in the store refuse to remain there. The wages are low and opportunities for advancement are few. Seventeen out of the one hundred in the eighth-grade group and thirty-four from the two hundred of the other group, or only 17 per cent of the total, are in stores, and those who receive more than \$7.00 a week are working on the commission plan, wages estimated on the basis of the number of sales. Again the girl must submit to the speeding-up process if she wishes to get out of the low-wage class.

The office position holds little hope for the girl who has had less than eight grades in school, and she seldom rises above \$7.00 a week

in simple routine work. The one exception to this which Table XVI shows is but another illustration of the persistency and native ability that may conquer many adverse conditions. For the girl who completes the elementary-school course there are opportunities commanding a wage varying from \$8.00 to \$12.00 or possibly \$13.00 a week. Much depends upon her accuracy and general reliability and other characteristics that may make her a valuable part of the routine. The clever stenographer may reach \$15.00 a week but is not likely to do so unless she is well qualified in English, and the majority fail at this point without more training than they acquire in the six months' course of the business college. The possession of the eighth-grade certificate is not required to enter the service of the Telephone Company, but comparatively few girls in the district succeed in qualifying without it, although the telephone girl stands next to the office girl in having achieved a position that gives social distinction. After passing through the school, operators formerly<sup>1</sup> began at the rate of eleven cents an hour for the first six months. The new schedule gives twelve cents an hour for the first month, with a more rapid rate of increase. It is also possible for girls to reach supervisory positions but few will be able to do so. Judging from the one hundred girls who fairly represent the tendency of those who complete the eight grades, 64 per cent of the girls in the neighborhood who are able to reach this group will find places in some form of office work or with the Telephone Company.

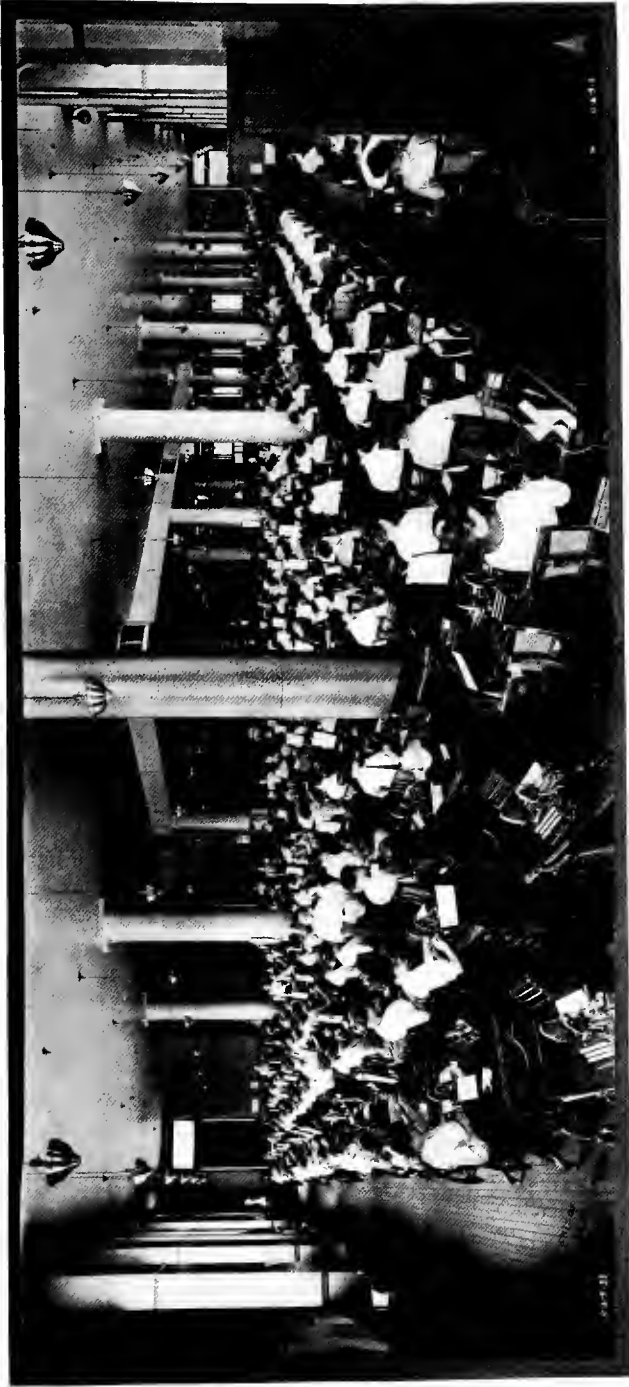
In the sewing trades, the factory, the bindery, and the yards, a girl is subject to seasonal employment. This is especially true of the low-wage class, for even in seasonal occupations the skilled workers may be retained or may find places by migrating from one part of the city to another.

<sup>1</sup> The following schedule was put into effect January 16, 1913:

12	cents	an	hour	for	the	first	month	
13	"	"	"	"	"	next	two	months
14	"	"	"	"	"	"	three	months
15	"	"	"	"	"	"	four	months
16	"	"	"	"	"	"	five	months
17	"	"	"	"	"	"	six	months
18	"	"	"	"	"	"	seven	months
19	"	"	"	"	"	"	eight	months
20	"	"	"	"	"	"	year	

and so on up to the maximum of 23 cents.





OFFICE GIRLS



## 6. HEALTH IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION

In the beginning of this investigation an effort was made to secure records of the girl's physical condition in relation to her home environment, her occupation, and the length of time she had been employed. It was impossible to make the records complete enough for any final conclusions. The average working-girl cannot afford to confess to physical weaknesses, but the majority accept as a matter of course "two or three colds every winter" or "frequent nervous headaches" for which no physician is consulted, or the need of the stimulation supplied by an excessive use of tea and coffee. The question is extremely complex, since health is dependent upon so many factors both psychic and physical. Overcrowding, lack of proper food, worry, and friction, all work together to undermine the health of a girl who might under a more favorable environment endure the stress of the occupation that appears to be the cause of her breakdown. However, a few suggestive facts grew out of the effort. The girls between eighteen and twenty years of age showed the best average of general good health, regardless of their occupations. Those under eighteen and over twenty showed the greatest number of minor ailments and nervous tendencies, also regardless of the character of the occupations in which they had been engaged. Girls who had changed occupation, when the new position meant greater satisfaction in work or some added pleasure due to increased wages, showed a better average of health than those working with a sense of discontent or a desire for changes which they were unable to bring about. Those twenty years of age and over who began at fourteen admitted that they were "tired most of the time." The late beginning, although it often meant no gain in wages over the girl of the same age who began earlier, had served to postpone the almost inevitable coming of weariness and aversion experienced by so many girls after six years of continuous employment. The head of the employment department in a large manufacturing industry using the piecework system is responsible for the statement that the average "efficient life" of the rapid pieceworker seldom exceeds three years. That is, few girls are able to endure for a longer period the combination of monotony and speed required to earn the high wage held out as an inducement at the beginning of their work.

These girls had been obliged to slacken the pace or change the occupation to bring into use a different set of muscles in order to avoid a nervous breakdown. The long rides, standing in crowded street cars, which 80 per cent of the girls are obliged to take, add an inconceivable amount to the burden of the day's work. A part of the desire for office and telephone positions arises from the shorter hours<sup>1</sup> required in these occupations. The unanimous testimony of the thinking mothers is that "American-born girls grow up with less physical vigor than their parents."

Exact information from employers was difficult to obtain, as no records are kept of the number who drop out of any industry or for what cause. The general impression of the managers of employment departments seems to be that girls leave to be married; that this is the final occupation open to all of them; that the limited period of their employment could not seriously affect their health. Many were able to point to their welfare work, restrooms, and trained nurses in attendance, and all looked upon the general appearance of those at the moment employed as a guaranty that the specialized form of occupation they represented could not be detrimental to health. One who visits any business or industry calling for large numbers of women and girls, will be impressed by the freshness and youth<sup>2</sup> of the mass. Yet it is obviously impossible to arrive at any conclusion through the study of the survivors, rather than the victims of modern industry.

The study of occupational diseases is not new. Miss Goldmark draws a line sharply between the longer established interest in special trade diseases and the recent physiological study of overwork. Fatigue and nervous exhaustion, the subtle and hitherto unrecognized effects of speed, monotony, noise, piecework, and the

<sup>1</sup> The Telephone Company requires eight hours of actual work, but pays for eight and one-half hours, a rest period of fifteen minutes being given each morning and afternoon. The hours of office girls are not uniform, but vary from eight to nine and one-half. Only two girls in the group were found working in a Union factory with a uniform eight-hour day.

<sup>2</sup> "Successive reports of the United States Census indicate that self-supporting girls are increasing steadily in numbers each decade, until 59 per cent of all young women in the Nation between the ages of 16 and 20, are engaged in some gainful occupation."—Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, p. 56.

stress of rush seasons are the dangers that threaten the workers of today. With the exception of the few domestic helpers, all of the wage-earning girls are subject to some form of this "new strain in industry." They are meeting it bravely, but blindly, driven by forces beyond either their comprehension or their control. Judging from studies in other industrial communities, there is abundant evidence that efficient girlhood in factory, shop, or store will mean inefficient motherhood<sup>2</sup> visible in "a heightened infant mortality, a lowered birth-rate, and an impaired second generation." What the results will be no one dares to prophesy. Even now there are signs of physical deterioration in this first generation from vigorous foreign stock.

#### 7. THE GIRL AND THE FAMILY

The girl begins her work in response to the family standard that demands the wages of children, and she remains amazingly docile in supplying the family need. (From time immemorial the economic value of the woman has been estimated in terms of the immediate needs of the family.) The customary duties of wife and mother are accepted as a matter of course and every girl is expected, after a temporary season of wage-earning, to go from the home of her father to that of her husband. "Economic independence" for the woman in a sense conveyed by the modern use of these words is as yet unknown and incomprehensible. It follows that what the girl earns is easily appropriated by the parents and, broadly speaking, obediently surrendered by the girl. Among the three hundred girls between sixteen and twenty-four years of age, there are 290 who have no independent control of their own wages. That is, what they earn goes into the common family fund and they receive back again from the mother what she decides they require for carfare, lunches, amusements, and clothes. Girls sometimes complain that they do not have enough "returned" to them in spending money and in "the kind of clothes other girls wear." If the mother is

<sup>1</sup> This foreign district does not yet furnish enough children of the second generation in America to make possible a study of mothers who had been in the class of working-girls here described.

<sup>2</sup> Josephine Goldmark, *Fatigue and Efficiency*, pp. 90-100.

indulgent with her daughter's desire for evening pleasures and some of the novelties and frivolities of fashion, there is little friction; if she fails to recognize these legitimate demands of youth, the distance between mother and daughter is widened, although among the five hundred girls their instinctive devotion to the family claim has been strong enough to keep them obedient. When the son begins to feel that he should no longer surrender his entire wage to his mother, this same dispute is promptly handled in a different manner. A definite sum, usually from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a week, is exacted from him, proportioned according to his wage and the amount the mother thinks she can demand and still keep him loyal to the family. This sum entitles him to board, lodging, and laundry. "Boys can run away if you don't do the right thing by them," says the foreign mother, "and of course you wouldn't treat boys the way you do girls." Girls sometimes complain of the superior attitude of the brother, but at the same time, they bow before it. Those who are earning more than either the father or the son accept a position in the household that forces them to coax, cry, or quarrel with the mother whenever they wish independent spending-money. With ten girls of this group, rebellion reached a climax. They demanded and secured an equal right with the brother to pay a fixed sum for board.<sup>1</sup>

Under these family conditions it is difficult to say what constitutes "a living wage" for a girl. These girls are supplementary wage-earners. They represent the class who furnish the "living at home" excuse of the employer who is questioned about his low wage scale. Parents and daughters alike accept with little protest a wage that could not cover the cost of the most meager living apart from the family. The woman who frets over the \$6.00 a week of the sixteen-year-old boy will regard the same wage complacently when the seventeen-year-old girl receives it. Whether the wage proves unsatisfactory from the older daughter depends entirely upon the amount the girl must have returned to her. Mothers object especially to the department-store positions that call for an undue

<sup>1</sup> In one family the matter was settled by accepting \$5.00 a week from the daughter, although only \$4.00 a week was demanded from the son who could earn the same amount as his sister.

outlay in clothes in proportion to the wage received, and make a point of encouraging the factory work which takes less account of the girl's appearance. The cheap office position is open to the same objection as the department store. The consensus of opinion among the more intelligent mothers is that considering the present high cost of living any occupation in the public eye requiring a girl "to look well" calls for a minimum of \$8.00 a week even when she has the advantage of living at home. Strange as it may seem, the fact that the wage sufficient only for carfare, lunches, and clothes leaves a part of the girl's support to be met by the rest of the family, is not regarded by the general run of parents as unjust. As long as this attitude remains, the individual supplementary wage-earner will continue to complicate the problem of wages.

Although the girl accepts the standards of the home that control the extent of her schooling and demand her wages, the first experience as a wage-earner brings a slight change in her relation to the other members of the family. The world is bigger than she knew and there are other ways of living than those she has been taught to accept. A new attitude toward life begins to develop, manifested in a little more self-assertion and a desire "to do as other girls do." Gradually she comes into her own world of hopes and ambitions in which the parents have little part. Since there is no place for social gatherings in the four-room flat, she meets chance companions on the corner, often gets an invitation to the five-cent theater, and "makes dates" for successive evenings. It must be remembered that it is possible for a girl to do this and preserve an almost incredible degree of innocence and childishness. As she grows older, the public dance-hall furnishes a larger share of her evening pleasures. Seventy-five per cent of the girls from sixteen to twenty-four years of age attend public dances where there is practically no supervision. Those who do not are among the younger ones who are still obedient to parental authority. It is common also for various social clubs to hire a hall, demand an admission fee to cover the cost of rent and music, and take charge of their own dance. Here there is no oversight beyond that exercised by a "floor committee" of exuberant young fellows who may be from eighteen to twenty-one years of age. Parents protest in vain.

The young people are making their own standards through the natural law of imitation which leads them to break away from the older ideals of the home and try to be a conspicuous part of some prevailing custom,<sup>1</sup> fashion or sentiment. The simple peasant courtesies having their being in class distinctions not openly recognized in America are despised. The mother does not understand why she must not kiss the hand of one whom her Old World instincts make her recognize as her "superior." In their own country the Slavic women below the middle class do not wear hats and among all other nations there is a tendency to make the head-dress represent a distinction that stands for something vital and unalterable. For this reason the American daughter places an exaggerated importance upon the possession of a fashionable hat<sup>2</sup> that brings girls of all classes and all nations to one level. Both father and mother cling to their native speech. Although the daughter does not lose it entirely, she takes little pains to preserve it. Dress and speech are the visible signs of the distance between parents and child. A further cause of contention lies in the demand of the children for a higher standard of living at home. Sons often unite with the daughters in calling for a better grade of food, more comfortable furnishings, or an additional room in the flat. It is a significant fact that the rebellion against overcrowding comes from the young people and not from the parents. This feeling even hastens the marriage of both sons and daughters who find seven or eight people in four rooms an unbearable condition. Although the father is not an unimportant factor in these disputes, it is usually the mother who manages the combined income of husband and children. If she wishes to retain her firm hold on the family purse, she is often forced to make compromises, and children on their part are often obliged to conform to the stern authority of the parents.

<sup>1</sup> At one of these club dances the writer remonstrated with a youth of nineteen who was dancing in an unseemly fashion. In a straightforward and manly way he assured his critic that he was in complete accord with "the latest thing in fashionable society on the other side of the town."

<sup>2</sup> A milliner of long experience in the neighborhood says she has witnessed many a dispute between mother and daughter over the relative amount that should be spent for the hat. The girl is willing to practice economy in every other direction; the mother is horrified at the cost of an unnecessary bit of finery.





OLD-COUNTRY MOTHERS



AMERICAN DAUGHTERS



Sometimes the children permanently raise the standard of living in the home; sometimes they sink under the burden of a daily life wholly incompatible with their tastes and ambitions. In this process of assimilation the American girl presents a strange mixture of independence and helplessness, self-assertion and submission, loyalty and rebellion, that confuse, anger, and grieve the foreign parent; but neither understands the subtle and irresistible forces at work to produce a situation so difficult for both father and mother and so dangerous for the girl.

## SECTION V. PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT

### I. SUMMARY

Before considering the possible methods of meeting some of the problems outlined, the leading points in the discussion may be summarized.

1. The immigrants of the stockyards district represent various races and different levels of both social and financial attainment.
2. The dominant educational standard of the people is the minimum legal requirement of the state, and by common consent the education of the girl is a matter of less importance than the education of the boy.
3. Eighty-nine per cent of the families feel an obligation to send their children to the parochial school for a part of their training. The constant movement between public and parochial schools makes loss of time unavoidable and increases the amount of retardation and consequent elimination that takes place before the completion of the elementary-school course.
4. Retardation and elimination statistics show a condition in the local public schools the reverse of that revealed in the investigations of other communities; retardation among boys is 22 per cent greater than retardation among girls, but owing to the inferior position assigned to the girl, the proportion of boys who remain in school to enter the eighth grade is 24 per cent greater than the proportion of girls who remain.
5. The wage of the father is an important factor in determining the extent of elimination.

6. The school is not meeting the needs of the majority of the girls in the district, and makes but slight impression upon those who fail to receive the benefit of a complete elementary course. They do not successfully attend the evening school and cannot make up for a deficient education by taking class instruction after working-hours.

7. The girls who complete eight grades recognize a value in the discipline of a complete course, and 43 per cent tried to take some advantage of educational opportunities after leaving the elementary school.

8. The compulsory education law that requires the alternative of school in the event of failure to find work during the fourteen-to-sixteen-year period is not enforced and cannot be as long as girls are allowed the independent possession of their work certificates.

9. The employment of girls under sixteen years is not necessary to the continuation of any business or industry. The occupations open to them are non-educative and attended by grave physical and moral dangers. The actual power of the girl to add to the family income has been exaggerated and overestimated.

10. The records of older girls show that 61 per cent of those who leave school before completing eight grades accept places in the factories where the opportunity to earn more than \$6.00 a week must depend upon their skill as pieceworkers. Sixty-four per cent of those who complete eight grades will find positions in some form of office work or with the Telephone Company, where there is a possibility of their earning from \$8.00 to \$15.00 a week.

11. Records of the relation between health and occupation are not complete enough for final conclusions, but one general fact is obvious: under the existing conditions of life and labor in the stockyards district the first generation of American girls lack the physical stamina of the foreign stock from which they come.

12. In the unavoidable conflict of standards, the gravest danger to the girl lies in the freedom she has demanded to resort to unregulated public places of amusement.

## 2. REMEDIAL MEASURES

The conditions summarized above call for remedial measures: (a) the reorganization of the school; (b) a revised compulsory

education law; (c) a new attitude to the problem of family poverty; (d) preparation for a city-wide vocational guidance program; (e) adequate provision for, and supervision of, public places of amusement and recreation.

a) *The reorganization of the school.*—Chicago has recently been made alive to the fact that “43 per cent of her school children who enter the first grade do not reach the eighth grade at all, and 49 per cent do not complete the eighth grade.”<sup>1</sup> A careful analysis of the present situation in the schools, a study of the need for industrial and commercial training, together with recommendations as to the form in which such training may be made a part of the public-school system of the city, may be found in the comprehensive report of the City Club of Chicago. Training of a preparatory trade character to be introduced into the seventh and eighth grades, vocational work and individual attention for overage pupils to enable them to complete the work of the grades, a trade school that shall admit girls of fourteen years who have completed six grades, the suggestion that “the subject-matter of the academic studies should be closely related to the handwork and to industrial needs,” are among the recommendations that will meet the more immediate requirements of the girls of the stockyards district. The education of a girl offers a complex and difficult problem, since it calls for the recognition of her need of adequate preparation for earning a livelihood, and the further more important preparation for life as a wife and mother. The first half of the problem has been surrendered to the store, the factory, the shop, and the business office; the second has been forgotten. At present the lack of training in the household arts, and the neglect of the teaching that will develop efficient motherhood threaten serious consequences to the future<sup>2</sup> generation. To

<sup>1</sup> *A Report on Vocational Training in Chicago and in Other Cities by A Committee of the City Club of Chicago*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> A young girl came to the Settlement recently from whom the following record was secured: left school in the sixth grade at fourteen years; spent three years in migrating from factory to factory wrapping soap or candy; met a young fellow at a public dance-hall; married at the age of seventeen; after one week of married life came to ask for a place in a factory. They had decided “to board with mother.” The American girl, slender, pale, inefficient in every direction save “wrapping,” returned with her husband to the old German mother who was still vigorous, a capable mistress of all the homely arts, but helpless before conditions that had fashioned her daughter.

be effective in remedying this condition among people who are not sufficiently conscious of what they lack, enlarged opportunities must be brought to their very doors. The reorganization of the courses in the local schools and the establishment of a trade school<sup>1</sup> within reach without the expenditure of carfare, are the first requisites of the voluntary attendance that will lead to a conscious awakening without which no lasting reformation is possible.

b) *A revised compulsory education law.*—The reorganization of the school will do much to arouse an interest that may induce voluntary attendance, but in a neighborhood of low educational standards and predominantly low wages, legislation to raise the compulsory age limit to sixteen years is imperative. In no other way will this new opportunity be opened to those whose need is greatest. The ignorance and indifference of parents, the failure of the present law as it relates to the fourteen-to-sixteen-year period, the non-educative character of all city occupations open to little girls, combined with the grave physical and moral dangers attending their employment, call for such legislation coincident with the provision for vocational training in the school. To protect the children of foreign parents from a mistaken sentiment that requires them to receive the greater part of their education in their mother-tongue, the law should demand that all candidates for work certificates be able to read and write the English language.<sup>2</sup> At best any standard minimum age as the chief requisite for beginning work is open to serious objections, and in the evolution of child-labor legislation<sup>3</sup> this arbitrary test will give way to a more intelli-

<sup>1</sup> Continuous efforts have been made to induce girls to attend the Lucy L. Flower Technical High School. Parents complain that "it is too far away and takes carfare." Since the opening of the school in September, 1911, only six girls from this district have taken advantage of this opportunity and only two are remaining for their second year.

<sup>2</sup> The present law demands that a child shall not be illiterate, but does not require even a rudimentary knowledge of the English language. Girls come to the Settlement who can neither read nor write the simple sentences of a First English Reader, but they hold out their work certificates as proof of their fitness for entrance to industry. The sentiment of the parents who wish their children to respect and use the mother-tongue is not undervalued and at all times deserves consideration, but the experience of the past years has proved that the children are too seriously handicapped by this shortsighted policy.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Florence Kelley has given a program for effective child labor legislation and its enforcement in *Some Ethical Gains through Legislation*, pp. 91-99.

gent consideration of the child's physical, mental, and moral fitness for a given occupation regardless of the exact number of years attained. Mr. Lovejoy, in reviewing the progress of the National Child Labor Committee, says: "The chronological age test for children seeking employment, which was general eight years ago, has been supplemented in many states by requiring sufficient physical examination to at least discover whether the child corresponds to the norm for its age, and the public now generally recognizes that educational and physical tests are essential to any adequate dealing with the problem of committing children to industry." The more exact knowledge that will result from the present movement for the vocational training, guidance, and supervision of working-children cannot fail to stimulate the needed legislation in this direction.

c) *A new attitude to the problem of family poverty*—The new compulsory education law will mean increased hardship in many families where even the trifling wages of the child have an enlarged value when added to the total family income. The results of investigations in other communities seem to prove that the early leaving of school is not determined by the family need. In the stockyards district the economic situation will demand a new attitude to the problem of the poverty that is increased by the neglect of the children. "The most hopeless condition of the poor is unfitness for work. Unfitness for work means low wages, low wages mean insufficient food, insufficient food means unfitness for labor, and so the vicious circle is complete."<sup>1</sup> Poverty of this kind is a social disease. It can never be an isolated fact, unrelated to the progress and welfare of the city as a whole. An effective recognition of the social rather than the individual aspect of poverty must lead to some practical means that shall make it possible for parents to accept the new law. Whatever the method, children must be relieved of the need of becoming premature breadwinners, an unnatural burden forced upon them by the ignorance, disability, or low wage of the parents. Public and private charity may intervene temporarily but the problem is ultimately one of wages. In her discussion of Minimum-Wage Boards, Mrs. Kelley says: "Poverty

<sup>1</sup> Rowntree, *Poverty*, p. 46.

is the regular human by-product of certain industries without standards, of certain socially subnormal industries. But it is obvious that in any rational society, each industry must sustain the people employed in it. An industry which supports its workers and their families only in part, places an undue burden upon charity and is, itself, a parasite upon the community."<sup>1</sup>

Through this newer attitude to the problem of family poverty it will be possible to establish the right of children to the normal period of childhood and to adequate training for future usefulness as citizens of an enlightened community.

d) *Preparation for a city-wide vocational guidance program.*—The Board of Education has recently established a department of vocational supervision.<sup>2</sup> The work of employment, supervision, vocational guidance, and investigation of the industrial opportunities open to children who leave school to go to work has been supported for two years by a number of private organizations under the direction of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy Department of Social Investigation. In different parts of the city the necessarily limited experiments of private efforts have proved both the need and the possibilities of this new movement, but its ultimate success must depend upon a method that will leave no community isolated and attempting to work out its own problems apart from the rest of the city. The School has come to the point of a severe testing of its efficiency, for it must attack the difficult problem of bringing into a city-wide co-operation the home, the school, and the world of industry, and of leading the way to new legislation. Through this unification of social agencies the weak points in each will be revealed. Vocational training must precede the possibility of vocational guidance, but at present there is a lack of sufficient information to enable the schools to make an intelligent choice of the trades that should be taught, or of the kind of instruction demanded for a profitable entrance to different trades and occupations. The proportion both of the skilled and of the unskilled who suffer from seasonal employment is unknown. A

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Florence Kelley, "Minimum-Wage Boards," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Circular of Announcement*, Series III, No. 18, May 1, 1913.



study of the relation between the demand and the supply of unskilled labor<sup>1</sup> may reveal the extent to which, under the present methods in business and industry, a large number of workers will be found in the automatic occupations requiring no previous training. It is obviously one of the first requisites of a city-wide program to make provision for securing such information<sup>2</sup> and keeping it up to date. With the best of knowledge at their command, it is a difficult task for adult minds to understand and guide the young. To further this aim the school should keep records of the child's progress, aptitudes, personal tastes, and ambitions, together with physical, mental, and moral characteristics. The child's transfer from one school to another should not break the continuity of this record. But it is not final to train children for the vocations to which they are seemingly best adapted. Provision should be made for a supervision of their employment during the most trying years of the adolescent period. A little girl who commits some trifling offense may become the ward of the Juvenile Court and may be carefully guided in all of her activities until she is eighteen years of age. The same careful supervision of all children will decrease the number recorded in the Juvenile Court. With the school as the center of the vocational training, guidance, and supervision of all children, it may be possible to prevent one of the great tragedies of life—the vocational misfit. What the school may do to enrich the lives of those whose daily work will be (according to present indications of the probable future of many industries) a mere deadly routine is one of the problems for the future. The effort to solve it may bring the employer to a recognition of the truth that business and industry in all forms must serve in the training for citizenship and the growth of democracy.

<sup>1</sup> Two men who were looking for a desirable place to establish a new factory recently came to the Settlement to ask for an estimate of the surplus labor available among women and girls. The reputation of the stockyards district for cheap and docile labor had reached them. It is not improbable that the future will see a spirit of city-wide co-operation that will make such a proposition not only unethical but wholly impracticable.

<sup>2</sup> A beginning has been made by the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy Department of Social Investigation in their report on finding employment for children who leave the grade schools to go to work.

e) *Adequate provision for, and supervision of, public places of amusement.*—It was stated in the beginning that no delinquent girl is included in the number who form the basis of this study. The five hundred girls, living and growing under the trying conditions imposed by conflicting standards, forced by the new methods of industry to accept outside of their homes the nerve-wrecking and non-stimulating occupations open to untrained girlhood, and seeking in the five-cent theater and the dance-hall to satisfy their youthful craving for excitement, are as yet among the large mass of upright working-girls who are constructing their own code of protective ethics. It is a dangerous experiment. Never before in the world's history have women been considered as a class of industrial workers. Never before have young girls been allowed the freedom they indulge in today. As the city, through the Board of Education, has decided to undertake the difficult task of bringing together all the agencies involved in the vocational adjustment of youth, so it must ultimately through some effective instrument make provision for recreation apart from the commercial enterprise that profits from the juxtaposition of vice, intemperance, and innocent amusements. The universal demand of the workers today for shorter hours of labor is gaining a hearing. The leisure they crave will be forthcoming, but to what end? The modern city has tried "this stupid experiment of organizing work and failing to organize play,"<sup>2</sup> and the disastrous results are apparent in the perversion of the normal instincts of youth. "The Right to Leisure," the social cry of the present century, must be established through municipal direction and control of all forms of public recreation.

#### APPENDIX

The following personal records are added because they represent typical experiences and attitudes of American-born girls in this district.

*Case 1.*—Left school in the sixth grade at fourteen years. Began in a fig and date factory at \$3.50 a week; stayed five months; box factory for one week at \$3.00; biscuit factory one month at \$3.50 a week; yards six months at \$5.00 a week; candy factory two weeks at \$2.50 a week; laundry two months

<sup>2</sup> The final word on this subject has been given by Jane Addams in *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*.

at \$5.00 a week; candy factory on piecework for two weeks, but earned less than the usual time wage; folded circulars in an office for three days and received \$1.35 for entire time; back to candy factory at \$4.00 a week. Girl was not sure of the exact order of her positions and thought she "might have forgotten two or three of them." Could not understand why anybody who had "seen so much of the city and had had so many experiences" should always find such low wages.

*Case 2.*—Left school in the sixth grade on her fourteenth birthday. Went into a soap factory; wiped and packed daily seventeen boxes, each box holding fifty bars of toilet soap; received \$4.00 a week when she could keep up this pace. At the end of the first year, hands were red and sore and head ached the last half of the week. During the second year often stayed out on Thursday because she could not endure the nervous strain without this interruption. Occasionally reached a speed of twenty-two boxes daily and received \$5.50 a week. At the age of sixteen, wearied, disgusted, and rebellious, she came to the Settlement to know "why girls have to work in nasty places," and to ask for a book on "How Poor Girls Became Famous." She had heard there were books like that and she had "got to do something quick."

*Case 3.*—Left school in the seventh grade at fourteen years. At home two years. Piecework in different bookbinderries for five years. Never earned more than \$7.00 a week. So sick of the monotony that she must try something new. Piecework in an upholstery factory for seven months. Ill for six months, heart permanently weakened. Placed in a good position to do housework, and rapidly improving.

*Case 4.*—Left school in the sixth grade at fourteen years. Factory pieceworker for five years, earning from \$8.00 to \$9.00 a week. Repeated interruptions due to illnesses of the fifth year. Nervous breakdown ascribed by doctor to overstrain of piecework. Idle six months trying to recover. Forced to accept an easy factory position at \$5.00 a week.

*Case 5.*—Left school in the seventh grade at fifteen years. Tried housework for six months at \$3.00 a week. Steady factory work at \$7.00 to \$8.00 a week. Tells experience of a "lightning worker" who once outdid herself and made \$4.00 on the day's piecework. A cut on the rate followed at once which reduced girls in her class to \$5.00 and \$6.00 a week. Two girls went to the office and complained on behalf of the entire number. They were discharged. The other girls cried over their machines but nobody could lead a strike.

*Case 6.*—Left school at fourteen in the seventh grade. A department-store girl for six years, advancing from \$3.00 to present wage of \$6.50 a week. Tired and worn. Says she knows now that "the untrained girl without a trade is not worth more than an average of \$6.00 or \$7.00 a week."

*Case 7.*—Left school in the fourth grade at fourteen years. Piecework for seven years. Can earn from \$13.00 to \$15.00 a week, but the average for the year round is from \$8.00 to \$9.00. Says a factory means "incessant watching and driving for speed." At fourteen an unusually strong, vigorous, solid girl



with the steady German capacity for continuous work. At twenty-one, forced to "lay by," nervous, listless, "disgusted with everything." Lost ten pounds of her weight between twentieth and twenty-first birthdays.

*Case 8.*—Left school at the close of the fourth grade when twelve years old. Began at once in a department store at \$1.50 a week. Between eighteen and twenty years of age at the height of her earning power, \$10.00 a week. At twenty began to weaken. Dropped to position at \$8.00. Severe eye-strain which glasses could not relieve. Finally went into a bindery "for a chance to sit down." The change from constant standing to constant sitting improved general health and relieved eye-strain.

*Case 9.*—Eighth-grade girl began in a department store at \$3.00 a week. In eighteen months rose to \$4.50. Tried the "commission on sales plan" which averaged \$15.00 a week. Lasted one year. Broken in health. At home for one year. Returned to another store on steady wage of \$6.00 a week.

*Case 10.*—Left school in the fifth grade at fourteen years. Factory worker for six years. Average of \$8.00 a week for past four years. Says: "I have earned money for the family and they could not live without my wages, but I know nothing. Foreign people will not teach a girl anything because they think she will marry by eighteen years. I am considered old at twenty, but I cannot marry a foreign man and live like my parents."

In the absence of more cases the extent to which the following are typical of what the stockyards district will produce is an open question. Miss Goldmark<sup>1</sup> quotes from English records of the lowered birth-rate among women who have spent their girlhood employed in stores.

*Case 1.*—Left school in the fifth grade at fourteen years. Home two years. Worked in a bookbindery nearly three years. Average wage \$6.00 a week. Has been married two years and seven months. No children.

*Case 2.*—Left school in the fifth grade at fourteen years. Reached average of \$9.00 a week in a department store. Has been married four years. No children.

*Case 3.*—Left school in the fifth grade at fourteen years. Factory girl for four years. Never could earn more than \$7.00 a week. Has been married four years. No children.

*Case 4.*—Left school in the seventh grade at fourteen years. Department store for six years, rising from \$3.00 to \$10.00 a week. Has been married five years. No children.

*Case 5.*—Left school in the seventh grade at thirteen years. Large and vigorous and "passed for fifteen." Department-store girl for six years. Feet swollen till she was unable to stand. Became an office girl for one year. Has been married three years. No children.

<sup>1</sup> *Fatigue and Efficiency*, p. 96.



